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THE TRAITOR SPY

BY W. J. HAMILTON,

AUTHOR OF THE FOLLOWING DIME NOVELS:

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It was a level plain, to the north of old Fort Edward, upon which our story opens. A band of riflemen were camped in an open glade, surrounded on every side by forest trees. In looking at them you could not fail to see that they were men who had seen service. Their green coats were frayed and ragged, and their moccasins torn by painful marches. No play-day soldiers they, but men who had fought in many fields, and against the wily savage, who lurked in the thickets, and from their cover sent death and destruction into the ranks of a foe who could make no return. Who were these men? It is answered in two words—Putnam's Rangers!

In these troublesome times few men understood bush-fighting, and of these few *Israel Putnam* was one of the chief. He knew that *fire* must be fought *with* fire. That the only way to defeat an ambush was to lay one counter to it. His men knew all the signs in the woods, and could read a trail like a printed book. The great partisan knew what it was to find himself in a circle of living fire, and a hail of leaden balls. He carried no tents. His men could lie down to rest upon the green-sward, and sleep as well, perhaps better, than they could have rested under a silken canopy—far better than those pampered sybarites who grumble at a ruffled rose-leaf.

The day was coming to a close, and the rangers were cooking their evening meal. Their diet was simple. It consisted of venison and corn bread, which they themselves had baked in the ashes. But they enjoyed it. Labor sweetens food, and they had tramped many a weary mile, over rugged roads, to reach this point. Broad-shouldered, sinewy, hard-fisted fellows, they were the men of whom, in after days, we made our heroes. Their fires were very small and the wood dry, so that little smoke rose to betray the whereabouts of the camp. All along the edge of the woods, lying prostrate in the bushes, lay the scouts, ready to give warning of a lurking foe.

One group of three were sitting apart from the rest, discoursing in low tones. One of them was a tall young man, wearing the stripes of a sergeant—a handsome fellow, with a face embrowned by toil, and long, dark hair falling to his shoulders. He was closely shaved, with the exception of his **mustache**, which was allowed to grow long. He was dressed

In the regular uniform of the rangers, a green hunting-shirt of homespun cloth, bound at the waist by a leathern belt, supporting a sword and pistols. The hand with which the sergeant was caressing his mustache was not "brawny," but, like his face, showed signs of toil. The next person was a private, a small fellow, with a dark but rather comely face, who was laughing heartily at something which had been said by the sergeant.

"Pshaw, man," said he, "what is it if the pretty maiden has turned cold for a little. It will not last. There never was a thing yet which ended in mischief which did not have an under-current of woman in it. Let the girl alone. It will come all right, no doubt."

"You are laughing at me," said the sergeant. "Were you ever jilted yourself?"

"Don't be sulky; of course I have been."

"Then why not have a little sympathy with a fellow in a like predicament? You pretend to be a friend. Is it a friend's part to laugh at a poor soldier in trouble?"

"What would Captain 'Put.' say, if he could only hear that lachrymose speech?" laughed the young man. "His favorite sergeant, Willis Seaton, turning soft about a girl, and all for nothing, too! Who, of all the band, has as good a chance as you? Don't tell me she don't care for you; I know better. I can tell by the very look of a girl when she cares for a man. She will always show it; only give her *time*."

"Thank you," said Willis, eagerly. "That is like a friend. I knew that you could not mean to play upon my feelings. Then what does she mean by being so often with Stephen Bates?"

"I don't know," said the other. "What ever she sees to like in Steve Bates, I don't know. But she certainly is with him a great deal. For my part, I never could make out what induced the captain to take the fellow into the company. I know he has been to Montreal and Quebec, for he let something drop one day which convinced me of that. Now, I have been there, too, but not in the sort of way he went. I risked my neck. I doubt if he ever as much as put his in any danger."

"Do you think him a traitor, Charley Brady?"

"Can't say *what* I think. You know, Will Seaton, I am not a man to talk about any one without good cause, and I do not like Steve Bates. I may be wrong; he may be faithful to our cause, but I'll be shot if I *think* so."

"I should like to catch him tripping," said Willis, eagerly. "Nothing would suit me better, provided he had done no harm to the band."

"I've got my eye on him," replied Charley. "And when I do watch any one, you may make up your mind that he won't do many things without my knowledge. I hope he is all right. About our Ada, I'm not so sure. I wish I *could* understand what she has to say to Steve."

"She is in love with him," said the other, beginning to look sulky again.

"There you go again, Willis! I tell you I don't believe any such thing. You are a jealous blockhead. As if any woman could prefer Steve Bates to *you*."

"There is no accounting for taste. I've seen worse things than that done. Steve Bates is not a bad looking fellow, you know well enough."

"A good deal of the sneak about him, I should say! But see! here is Wild Jim, as I am a living sinner."

As he spoke there was a slight commotion among the men, and a strange figure came to the front and stopped before the fire at which the young men were seated, uttering an eldritch laugh. It was a long-limbed fellow, with a face so browned by exposure that it would have been impossible to tell by that that he was a white man; but his hair was white as snow, and drifted in a heavy mass upon his shoulders. He was not very old, not more than twenty-five, and yet his hair looked like that of a man of eighty. His dress was a pair of tattered moccasins, a hunting-shirt, over which a blanket was thrown after the fashion of the Indians. His face had a melancholy in it which it was impossible to define. In one hand he held a beautiful rifle, in the other a dead partridge, and over his shoulder he carried a hunting pouch filled with small game. He stood there with his head thrown back, laughing in that strange way of his, and pointing at the game in the bag on his shoulder.

"Ah, Jim," said Willis, kindly, "I am glad to see you. Where have you been so long?"

"Over the hills toward Oneida, looking for *her*. Where has she gone, Will? All the time when Jim is in the woods and looks for her, she isn't there. The Mohawks did that. I hate them. Jim has always a bullet for them, and a sharp knife."

"What did you get the game for, Jim?"

"*That?* Why, for *her*, of course. Don't you suppose she will be hungry when I find her? Those Mohawks are not good. They won't give her any thing to eat. You may have the birds in the pouch, but you can't have the partridge. She likes them."

"Who does he mean?" asked Charley.

"Hush; don't you know? He means his wife."

"What's that you say, Will?" said the young man, sharply. "Where is she, then? You know I went out at night to kill a deer by the spring. It wasn't far, and when I came back I couldn't find her. I don't know what happened to me then. My head got to be light as a feather; there never was such a head as mine. And my hair! Just look at it; see how white it is. That's because the Mohawks carried away Mary."

The story of Wild Jim, up to this time, can be told in few words. He had been a backwoodsman, a daring hunter, a good shot, and two years before the date at which my story opens he had married the daughter of a hunter like himself, and built him a cabin on the Mohawk. He told his story truly, as far as his crazed brain would let him. He had come back and found his wife dead upon the threshold, and had fled away into the woods, where he remained a week. When he came back, some hunters had found and buried the body of his wife. He returned with a crazed brain, and hair white as driven snow. Since that time, he had wandered aimlessly to and fro in the forest, subsisting by means of his rifle, and coming into the towns only to obtain a supply of powder and shot, for which he bartered peltries of value. He thought the Mohawks had carried off his wife, and always had the hope some day to find and claim her. Every one between the headwaters of the Mohawk and New York knew Wild Jim. Often,

in the long marches through the forest, the scouts of the English would see him, standing by the side of the path, leaning on his rifle, and watching them with that inscrutable look of suffering in his eyes. The Indians knew him. He often came into their towns and was safe from them, because the finger of the Great Spirit had been laid upon him. He was known to the rangers of Putnam, because he had often brought them information, which no other man could have obtained of the position and plans of the enemy.

"Where are you going now, Jim?" said Willis. "Are you not tired?"

"Jim is very tired," said he. "He has traveled miles and miles through the woods. And do you know, if I saw only the print of her moccasin, I should know in a moment it was hers, and follow on the trail through the woods, I don't know how far or how long, until I found her, I guess. Why don't she wait for me? Don't she know that Jim is tired, and wants to see her? Then why don't she wait?"

"Poor fellow," said Charley Brady, turning aside his head. "The first thing you know I shall be sniveling. I'm just such a fool. Who carried the poor fellow's wife away, Willis?"

"Nobody knows. He says it was the Mohawks. You must have heard of him, and of the vindictive hate with which he follows the members of that tribe. When he meets one in the woods, he never waits a moment, or says a word, but attacks him at once. His strength and agility are wonderful, and he literally has no fear of death. There is a special providence watching over such as he, or he would long ago have fallen a victim to his own temerity. I remember one fight we had with the Indians below Crown Point, and one of our officers, in leading a charge, had fallen half way between the contending forces. Three Indians crawled up to scalp him. Jim was standing by me. I said, 'Mohawks, Jim.' His face became like a fiend's, and he shot the foremost savage in a moment, and dashed at the others with drawn knife. In less time than it has taken to tell it, those Indians were dead and Jim had not even a scratch. He brought in the officer safely, too."

Jim, during this narrative, had stood with a blank, unmeaning

expression on his face, as if he did not know they were talking of him, muttering to himself,

“She isn’t here—she isn’t there—she isn’t any where!”

The poor fellow, wrapt up in his dead wife, could think of nothing else but her, and vengeance on those who had taken her away. His poor crazed brain could not take in the thought that the earth of her native valley had lain upon her breast during the two years he had been a wanderer through the Indian country, seeking her in every nook and corner of the land. No one was hard-hearted enough to tell him that she was dead; he would not have believed it if they had, and it was a pleasant delusion, and could do no harm, that one day he would find her, build a new home by the side of the beautiful river, and be as happy with her as he had been in the first months of the honeymoon, so rudely broken in upon by the red savages.

“Sit down and eat,” said Willis. “Come, Jim; there is always something for you in any camp where you can find Will Seaton.”

“Will is always kind to Jim,” said the poor fellow, softly. “Jim won’t forget that. Sometimes, when he is asleep out under the trees, he can see *two* that he loves—*her* and Will. Yes, Jim is hungry; he will eat a little.”

He sat down by their fire, and they gave him some venison steaks and corn bread on a piece of bark. He ate with the appetite of a man who had fasted long.

“When did you eat last, Jim?” asked Will, as he laid more steaks upon the coals. “You seem to be half starved.”

“Jim didn’t have time to eat,” said he, pausing in the act of taking a huge mouthful of the meat; “he was looking for her.”

“I’ll wager something that the poor fellow hasn’t put food in his mouth for two days. See him eat! How did you know where to find us, Jim?”

“Jim knows,” he said, a look of cunning coming into his eyes. “He can tell the tracks of the Rangers, and he knew that they would be good—always good to poor Jim when he is tired and hungry. May be if I stay here I can find her.”

“What sort of a woman was she?” asked Charley, in an aside, of Will.

Obtuse on every other point, the poor fellow could hear any thing said about his dead wife, and understand it in a moment.

"She? You've seen a star in the sky, when you laid out under the trees? You know how bright and good it looks? We'l, Mary was just as bright and pure to poor Jim."

"So she was," said Will. "You know I saw her once, Jim, when I was going up to Oswego?"

"Of course. Will, wouldn't you look for her, if you lost her, as I have?"

"Yes, Jim," said Will, sadly.

"So'll Jim. He'll look and look through the country, and by and by he'll find her. And if any Mohawk gets in his way, he'll get hurt, sure as you live. Jim don't like Mohawks. If they hadn't done it, his head wouldn't be so light or so queer all the time. He always kills Mohawks. Don't talk to Jim so much. He wants to eat."

Several of the men gathered about them, anxious to see Jim, who had a great reputation along the border. The noise they made at last reached the ears of the commandant, who thrust his head out to ascertain the cause. Seeing the men all grouped about a central point, and satisfied that it was a fight, a thing he would not allow among his followers, he pushed aside the tent-cloth, and came out. The men scattered right and left, to allow him to get to the fire. Old "Put.," as he was called, was a florid, light-haired man, with a most determined expression of countenance, which no man knowing him would care to change to anger. He had already earned a name as a partisan leader, and had fought under many commanders against the French. Acquainted with the tactics of the savages, he met them in like manner.

"What's this—what's this?" he demanded, quickly. "Why are the men so noisy?"

"If you please, captain," said one of the men, "Wild Jim is here."

"Ha, you don't say so! Let me have a look at him. I confess to considerable interest in the man, never having seen him. How did he come here?"

"Oh, captain, we always pass Wild Jim! He is sure to have news for us."

"I hope he has now," said Putnam, advancing to the fire, where Jim was serenely engaged in finishing off the meat which Will had given him, seeming to be utterly unconscious that any body was looking on.

Putnam said nothing until he had finished, and then asked him to go with him.

"No," said Jim, shortly; "Jim won't."

"Jim *won't*!" cried the choleric Putnam, angry in a moment. "What do you mean by that?"

"Captain—captain!" said Willis, in an entreating tone, "be careful. You do not understand Jim. It is impossible to drive him to any thing, but he is as easily swayed by kindness as a little child. I will get him to come, but you had better let me question him."

"Go to your own fires, men," said Putnam, waving his hand. "Now then, sergeant, let me hear you talk to this gentleman who has the temerity to say he *won't* to Israel Putnam."

"Who?" cried Jim, quickly.

"Putnam," said the sergeant.

"Good!" answered Jim. "Fights Injins. Jim likes him. Go with *him*, any time."

Putnam sat down by the fire, and Jim gave a rambling account of the position of the French forces, interspersed here and there with accounts of what he had done in searching for his lost wife, and what he still meant to do. Putnam listened with wonderful patience for him, and when the young man had finished, thanked him warmly. He told of a small band of French and Indians who had broken away from the main body and gone toward the head-waters of the Hudson, to surprise a few families living there.

Putnam at once sent off an express to William Henry, for permission to follow and destroy this force, and waited for the return of his messenger on the spot where he had camped. While there, and before the return of the messenger, Jim went to Putnam as he sat in the shade of a tree.

"Jim is going," he said.

"Why not stay with us?" asked the Partisan.

"Jim *can't*. If he stays here, how will he find her?"

"Will you come again, and tell us about the French?"

"Yes, Jim does not like Frenchmen. One of them was with the Mohawks when they took away Mary. He hates them. Good-by."

With these words, he plunged into the forest, passed the guard, and was away on the distant trail.

CHAPTER II.

STEPHEN BATES.

EARLY in the evening, a small detachment which had been out on a scout came in, under the leadership of a young man well known on the border, Stephen Bates by name. He was a noted scout, but one whose record was not pure. He knew too much of the French and their ways, talked their language glibly, and knew by heart the places of interest in their cities. Some ill-natured people were hard-hearted enough to say he played into the hands of both French and English, and made money by the operation. He was a wiry, active, light-built fellow, with a good-looking face and an evil eye. For some reason, Putnam trusted him, and would not hear a word to his discredit. He had "tried Steve Bates," he said, "who had saved his life once in an ambush."

The scout came in, dragging by the collar poor Jim, whose expression betokened suppressed rage. Putnam sprung forward.

"Why do you hold that poor fellow, Stephen?" he said. "Do you not know that he lacks sense? Let him free at once!"

Stephen obeyed sulkily enough. Jim shook himself and looked fiercely at his captor.

"See how vindictive the dog looks at me," said Bates. "Has he any right to roam at will through the forest, and lurk in the bushes, watching our movements?"

"Even the Indians respect those who lack sense, Stephen. Don't you be any worse than they. Jim don't know exactly what he does."

"Why isn't he *red*?" cried Jim, in an impatient tone. "If he was red, like a Mohawk, I would kill him. Did *he* carry away Mary?"

Stephen started violently, and the blood rushed into his face. Willis Seaton was watching him keenly, and saw that the accusation staggered him in a moment. What could it mean?

"He is a *fool*," cried Bates, hoarsely. "He don't know what he is talking about. Why was I such a blockhead as to bring him here?"

"What had he done?"

"He was lurking in the woods watching us. I don't like to be watched by any one."

"He made no resistance?"

"No."

"I must ask you in future not to meddle with him. Jim, I am sorry he brought you back. You may go now, if you wish," said Putnam.

"Why don't he tell me?" cried Jim, again. "Why don't he say it. Did *he* carry away Mary?"

"The infernal idiot," said Bates, moistening his lips with his tongue. "What does he mean, I say? Who is the Mary he prates about?"

"His wife; she was murdered by savages, and he says a white man led them."

The face of Stephen Bates became white as ashes, and he gasped for breath.

"He lies!" he shouted. "An infernal lie. There was no white man—"

"What do *you* know about it, Stephen?" asked Willis, calmly.

"*I*! Nothing. Blast it, what should *I* know about it?"

"But you said there was no white man in the affair."

"Did I? You stopped me before I finished. I was about to say that no white man could be guilty of such a crime. What is it to you, any how, Will Seaton? I don't know any thing about the man's wife, and I'm sorry I brought him here."

"Whatever he says, *he's* a liar!" said Jim. "Why don't *he* tell me he didn't carry off my Mary?"

This reiterated request angered Bates, and he sprung at the poor fellow. But Jim put out one powerful arm, and almost with a touch Stephen Bates lay upon the ground, with the blood gushing in a crimson stream from his nostrils and ears. The latent power in the frame of the madman was wonderful. He looked down at his work with a pitying glance, as if he did not fully understand how he came to be lying there, with blood upon his face.

They raised Bates and dashed water in his face, and at last revived him. His first movement, upon gaining consciousness, was to grasp his gun and point it at the head of Jim, at full cock. There was no fear in the eye of the demented hunter as he laid his hand upon the muzzle of the piece and turned it aside. It went off in the struggle, and the ball passed close to the head of one of the rangers, and buried itself in a tree by the edge of the woods.

"Sergeant of the guard," cried Putnam, "arrest Corporal Bates."

Willis came forward and laid one hand upon the shoulder of the other. He ceased struggling in a moment, but a gleam of intense hatred showed itself in his eyes.

"Why am I placed under arrest?" he said, looking at Putnam.

"For making a disturbance in my camp. By the Eternal I would lay my brother by the heels for half the trouble you have made this morning. Consider yourself under arrest."

Bates bowed, but said nothing. Willis called four men of the guard and gave the prisoner in charge at once. Jim, from the moment the gun exploded, had remained in the same position, holding it by the muzzle.

"I think you had better go now, Jim," said Charley Brady. "The old man is mad, and when he is, he rips out things he wouldn't say if he was cool. That's 'Old Put.'s' way, you know."

Jim moved slowly away, but stopped.

"Jim wants his gun," he said.

They brought it to him, and he again plunged into the forest, tramping on over logs and through tangled underbrush, far into the night. He seemed to have no definite object in

view, but lay down to rest when tired, unheeding the shrill cry of the panther near at hand. He was a child of the forest. Early habit had so accustomed him to its dangers, that they were old acquaintances, which he did not fear. When the morning broke, he sat up and ate a few mouthfuls of venison, which Charley Brady had placed in his pouch. While doing this, he became conscious that a number of men were conversing in quick, vivacious tones, not far away. All the scout instinct within him was aroused by the sound, and he took up his rifle and advanced with cautious steps in the direction whence it came. His moccasined feet made no sound upon the forest path. Long training had made his step as light as that of the mountain goat. The voices became louder and more animated, and pushing aside the bushes, he looked in upon a French and Indian camp.

About fifty white men and twice that number of Indians were in the open glade. The men were dressed in the gay uniform of the French partisan force, and were in reality a portion of the famous band of Perrie Arnaud, so often pitted against Putnam in the field. It was the French who were doing the talking, while the Indians stalked stiffly up and down, looking, if the truth must be told, a little disgusted at the loquacity of their white friends. But Frenchmen have this one failing, even in the presence of great undertakings—they *will talk*. Jim, lying in the bushes, heard the conversation. He was at the top of a bank, which looked down into the camp, and directly below him three officers were talking and drinking wine.

“And then let William Henry look out,” said one, continuing the conversation from the point up to which Jim reached the bank. “Ah, my friend, you do not know Montcalm. He is a great man, far greater than Baron Dieskau could ever have been. There is something sublime in the character of the ‘Great Marquis.’ Who but he would have descended on the border in such a time as this, and laid it desolate in a moment? Women weep for fathers, brothers, lovers and sons, who will never come back to their arms, and the marquis is the cause.”

“It is a strange sort of glory, after all.”

“It is the only way. The lilies of France must not pale

before the ensign of England. The Cross of St. George shall never wave where the French tri-color has been. And when the day comes of which the English boast, when Quebec shall fall before their arms, two men will be dead. One will be the Marquis de Montcalm; the other Perrie Arnaud."

"There is not one among us, Perrie, who does not feel as you do on that subject," said the same officer who had spoken before. "You have done good work for France in your day. You have no rival as a partisan leader in the new world."

"You seek to flatter me, Alexandre," said the partisan. "I can name a man who has done much, and, could he have the opportunity, would do more than I have done."

"Of whom do you speak?"

"Of him who is called Israel Putnam. He is a bold and daring man. Some of my Indians tell a tale of him which is truly wonderful. They had pursued him to the river bank, above the rapids, where there was no retreat, and were closing in on him with shouts of triumph, when they saw him push out an old batteaux from the shore, without an oar, and start down the rapids. They fired at him until he was in the thick of the rapids, and then paused to see the result. The rapids, as you know, are filled with rocks, looming up in every direction, with narrow channels sloping down between. Into this hell of boiling water, his eagle eye watching every chance, his hands upon either gunwale of the batteaux, that brave man darted. Guide the boat he could not, even if he had had a steering-oar. The Indians, with uplifted hands, beheld the descent. Half a dozen times it seemed as if the hero was about to be dashed upon the rocks, when some lucky eddy turned the course of the boat at the moment it seemed to be bearing down to destruction. But at last it was past the danger, and darted safely down the river, out of sight and sound. There are not many on this continent—not many in the world, who would have dared the passage of those rocks, even with those howling red devils in the rear."

"You are right, Perrie. I admire this man as you do. Well, then, shall we meet him? He will give us work to do!"

"You may well believe it," said Arnaud. "I do not know where he is to be found."

"Nor I—" began the other ; but he was interrupted by an untoward event.

Jim, in leaning forward to hear what was said, broke off a portion of the shelving bank and rolled after it himself, tumbling into the very midst of the French troops. A dozen hands grasped him, but he shook them off easily, and stood up. A soldier seized him again, but he grasped him by the waist, whirled him over his head, and dashed him to the earth with great violence. An angry yell burst from the French, and many swords were drawn, when they saw that Jim had dropped suddenly to the earth, and clasping his knees with his hands, was looking up at them with the sad expression often seen in his countenance. The French officers had never met him, but several of the privates had, and called out to their comrades not to touch him, for he was crazy. Every weapon dropped, and they gathered about him.

"Why did you come here?" demanded Arnaud.

"I'm *Jim*," said he, quietly. "Don't you know Jim. His head is light ; he can't understand what you say. Why did that man on the ground get mad at poor Jim. *He* didn't want to touch him. He *made* him do it.

They lifted the insensible soldier and carried him away, while one of the soldiers who knew Jim explained to Arnaud who he was. Arnaud nodded.

"Some of our Indians did it, then. There must have been one of our officers with them. Who could it be?"

"I know," said the soldier.

"Tell me who it was."

He bent forward and whispered. Arnaud started, and a flush of anger came into his face.

"Now a curse upon all such miscreants," he said. "It is the curse of war that such instruments must be used. This outrage, if known, would reflect darkly upon the glory of France, and men would and *do* point to it as an example of the atrocity *we* perpetrate, when, if the truth was known, the fault was nearer home. And so the loss of his wife made this poor lad crazy?"

"Yes, monsieur le capitaine."

"He has wonderful strength."

"You have no idea of it yet. He has no fear. If forty

men were to attack him with weapons in their hands, he would stand as firm as a rock, and never blench until he was cut down. I myself have seen him in battle, in a struggle with half a dozen Indians, worst them all. He is a dead shot, and, among other things, can drive the nail at one hundred feet, every time."

"How do you mean?"

"If you drive a nail into yonder tree part way, he will drive it the rest of the way with a bullet. He is sure of his aim."

"I should like to see a trial of his skill," said Arnaud. "Do you think there will be any trouble in getting him to shoot at a mark?"

"Not the slightest. If you will allow me, I will try to do it."

"See what you can do," said the officer.

The fellow approached Jim and began to handle his gun. Jim, whose affection for the piece was great, put his hand out to stop him.

"Don't touch it," said he. "It's a good gun; maybe you'll spoil it."

"I don't think it is much of a gun," said the French soldier. "Bah! there are many here who have better guns than that."

"But will they shoot straight?" asked Jim, angrily. "When you hold them out, do they go off, and hit what you point them at?"

"Neither will yours."

"How do you know? You couldn't do it. My gun won't hit for any one but me."

"We've got guns here that will drive a nail at a hundred feet."

"Pshaw!" said Jim, sneeringly, "so will mine. But I don't believe you have got any gun that will do it. Let me see it."

"If I get it, and try to drive the nail, will you try to drive 't, too?"

"Yes," said Jim. "I know my gun can do it."

"I don't believe it can," said the soldier. "I'll go and get my gun."

One of the men fixed a nail in the bark of a tree, and drove it partly home. The French soldier, who was a good shot, sent a ball within a hair's-breadth of the nail. Jim took up his gun and began to load, laughing boisterously as he did so. When his piece was loaded, he stepped to the place where the soldier had stood, jerked the gun up to his shoulder, and fired, apparently without aim. Several men rushed up to see the effect of the shot, and the nail was found to be driven into the wood, to the very head. A cry of surprise from the French attested the surety of his aim.

"It was an accident," said one of the officers. It is impossible that he should hit it otherwise. He fired without aim."

"You *lie!*" cried Jim, whom nothing could arouse to anger so quickly as the merits of his favorite gun; "my gun can do it again."

He did not take any credit from the transaction. His *gun* had done it, and the assertion that it was an accident galled him. Another nail was driven into the bark, and, as before, the bullet from Jim's gun drove it deep into the tree. A murmur of admiration from the officers, and encouraging "Vivat's" from the men, pleased Jim.

"My gun can do better than that," said he. "It's easy to hit a thing that stands still, but how are you going to hit one that flies in the air? Do you see that eagle yonder?"

He pointed overhead as he spoke. They looked up. A magnificent eagle was soaring along about two hundred yards away.

"You can not hit him," said Arnaud.

"My gun can," answered Jim. "It's a pretty gun."

"You can't do it," repeated Arnaud.

Jim brought his rifle to his shoulder, bearing on the scaring bird. Then came the whip-like crack, and the great bird seemed to become suddenly stationary, while a quiver ran through its pinions, as if he was appalled by some sudden danger. Then, with a single scream, he folded his wings to his side, and fell like an arrow, striking the ground not ten feet from the spot where Wild Jim stood, leaning on his rifle.

"'Tain't much to do," said Jim, "when you have got a gun that minds you, as mine does."

"What a man he would make for our forces, if he could be got to fight!" said Arnaud. "What do you say, my boy—do you wish to join us?"

"What for?" said Jim. "Jim always likes to go where he has a mind to, and if he promised to stay with you, he would have to do it. No, I won't join you. Besides, I don't like Frenchmen. A Frenchman carried *her* away."

"No," said Arnaud, eagerly; "you are wrong. I would not have that blot upon a Frenchman's name. It was an Englishman."

"What!" screamed Jim, a light like smoldering flame coming into his eyes. "*Don't* say that. Who was he?"

"I mean," stammered Arnaud, seeing that he had said too much, "that it could not have been a Frenchman. The crime was too base. I do not mind *men*—but when it comes to *women*, I say curse the man who has the heart to do it."

They tried to keep Jim with them; but he was restless, and longed to get away, and so they did not keep him. They thought he could not do them any harm.

CHAPTER III.

ADA.

FORT WILLIAM HENRY was built upon the site of the battle at which Lyman won the victory for which General Johnson, afterward Sir William, was rewarded. It was at this time that the French colonists were most exasperated against the English, and it seemed necessary to have a work upon the path from Canada. Fort Edward was first built. But Sir William, more as a monument of his victory than any thing else, built a useless wooden fort, to which he gave the name of William Henry. Such men as Putnam looked on with ill-concealed disdain, knowing that this would only be a trap for the destruction of brave men. He had joined with others in execrating the deed which had roused the hatred of the French settlers—the destruction of the French settlements at Acadie.

At Grand Prè alone, four hundred men and boys came together, unarmed, at the summons of Winslow. And when they were gathered in the church he read to them his cruel orders. They were not allowed to emigrate to Canada, among people of their own blood, for fear that they might add something to the strength of the French; but they were to be driven forth, beggars and wanderers, among a people who were not of their kindred or tongue. Then they were driven, at the point of the bayonet, on board the shipping, marching through a line of weeping women, who were not taken with them, mournfully chanting psalms as they marched along. Seven thousand of these poor people were taken to the British colonies and left there helpless. In that time of desolation, parents sought in vain for children, and lovers for each other. It is no wonder that, in their after wars, the French showed little mercy. The English king rewarded the men who had done the work, but it brought fearful retribution in the after years.

Fort William Henry was built of wood, and upon rather low ground. There seems to have been ill-luck continually hanging over the post. Twice it was nearly destroyed by fire, but was saved by the intrepidity of the provincials. Among the officers under Webb was a captain in the Sixtieth, Cadwell by name, who had grown gray in the service of his king. He had seen his family droop and die, until none were left to him but one child, his daughter Ada. She had been at school in Albany, but, having determined to have her with him, he sent her under escort from Albany to Edward, and from that, by horse, to William Henry. Perhaps if he had known the danger hanging over the fort, he would have left her safe in Albany. But she was there before the threatening of disaster took shape in the form of a real invasion. Oswego was besieged and would fall before they could give the post any help. Munroe, a resolute officer, had sent to Webb, at Edward, for reënforcements, but the vacillating policy of that worthy refused them. Munroe, too good a soldier to do any less than what he was ordered, remained at the post, with an insufficient force, vainly waiting for the coming of the men he hoped for from Fort Edward. He sent Putnam to the front, with his rangers, but they were under orders to return

to Edward within a week, and could be of no use to them in case of an attack.

Ada was walking by the outer walls of the fort, two days before the time when Wild Jim found the rangers upon Wood Creek. A delicate creature, little fitted for that wild life, but with enough of her father's patriotic blood to sustain her. A step roused her. She looked up; Stephen Bates was by her side. An expression of surprise and pain passed over her fine face.

He noticed this, and set his teeth hard together, evidently annoyed that she should show so plainly her fear of him.

"A beautiful day," he said.

"Very," said Ada.

"Do you know that there is work to do on the border?"

"What do you mean?"

"We fear more Indian incursions. It is reported by our scouts that the French are gathering a great force at Crown Point to attack us. If they do, woe to poor William Henry!"

"Do we fear the French?" said Ada, scornfully.

"We have cause, if they come down upon us three to one. But, before the grand attack, we shall have the usual scenes of horror—burning cabins, scalped and mutilated settlers."

"I wish these fearful quarrels between nations would cease. Alas, that two great powers, for the lust of possession to which neither have any right, should shed so much noble blood on both sides, and even employ savages, whose instincts are bloody, to do their work for them! I can not forgive my country for being guilty of such things."

"Will you walk with me?" said Stephen, offering his arm.

"I think I need both hands to take care of my dress," said Ada, refusing the proffered arm.

"I think you would do well to take my arm," he said.

"And why so, sir?"

He made no answer, and they walked on side by side, no looking at her furtively from under his heavy brows. She spoke again.

"You have said things I do not understand, Mr. Bates," she said. "Will you explain yourself?"

"That is easily said," replied Bates; "and yet, when a man's

hope of happiness through life hangs on such a thread as this, he does not like to sever it. Woman's faith or fancy are very slight things; yet I have dared to build upon your faith, and hoped I had touched your fancy. Ada, I love you, and want you for my wife."

"I do not know what I have done to encourage you to say this again to me," said Ada. "I have endeavored to show you that I do not care for you. This is not the first time you have said this. What do you hope to gain by following me, when I have told you that you are wasting your time?"

"I have never given you my reasons why I think you are wrong," said the young man. "But I *have* reasons, strong reasons, I think. Of course I understand why you do not care for me. I am not blind. And let me say to you that you are sowing dangers thickly about the feet of the man you think you love. Where can Willis Seaton make his bed in safety from this hour? When he lies down at night, there will be one near by who has the will to end his life, and who will some time have the opportunity."

"Do you threaten him to my face? You dare not do it before his."

"I beg your pardon," said Bates. "I think you wrong me. Those who know Stephen Bates the best will say that he has no fear of any thing that man can do to him. Willis Seaton, even hating me as he does, will not say that I am *afraid* of him. I have never said to him that which I now say to you, because it did not seem politic for me to do so. But, there will come a time, believe me, when I shall speak to him in language he can not fail to understand."

"Coward!"

His cheek flushed, and he gnawed his lip in a nervous manner before he replied.

"Why do you give me that name?"

"Why? Who but a coward would insult a woman? Who but a coward would talk to her of what he will do to one she holds dear? Yes, since you drive me to it, I will tell you that I *do* love Willis Seaton, that I am betrothed to him, and that, some day, God willing, I shall be his wife. You force me to say this, and now I will say more. I never liked you from the first. There is something about you which strikes

me with a nameless terror, an undefinable dread of evil, which I can not understand. You must have a crafty, cruel nature, as opposite to *his* as daylight is to darkness."

"Go on," he said, gloomily. "You are doing well."

"I shall not hesitate to tell you what I feel. From this hour, understand that I am not to be approached by you save as a stranger!"

"That can not be, Ada."

"And why not?"

"If you drive me away from you I give you my word that I will kill Willis Seaton within a week."

She looked at him. His eyes, stern, fixed, and relentless as fate, shot terror into her soul. She believed he would do as he said. His was one of those cold, unbending natures, with whom to *will* was to *do*. He had said that he would kill Willis Seaton if she drove him away from her, and he would keep his word.

"I do not ask much for the present," he said, in the same determined tone. "I only wish you to be to me no more nor less than you have been for the last month. Do you promise this?"

"We need not be enemies, Mr. Bates. But you must not speak to me of love."

"I shall not for the present. Only bear this in mind: I have chosen you for my wife, and if you should be mad enough to marry some one else, I would kill him, even at the altar's foot. But this is idle. Where is your father?"

"At his quarters."

"You will see him soon?"

"Yes."

"Then tell him this: The times are coming when William Henry will be no safe place for a woman nurtured as you have been. The Indians and French will overrun the frontier and lay it waste. There is only one way for you, and that is to go to Fort Edward and from that to Albany. The captain will feel safer if you are away from this."

"Have the French a better leader, then?"

"They have one far superior to any general we have. He is called the Marquis de Montcalm. See how he took Oswego by surprise. They never dreamed of his coming until

he was fairly landed on the coast. And there he is now, and in a few days the border will tremble at the sound of his name."

"How do you know all this?"

"I know things of which these thick-heads would never dream."

"It does seem odd that you should know so much about the movements of the French. One would suppose you had been among them."

"I *have*," said Stephen, coldly.

"You confess it?"

"Why not? I am a scout. It is my business to go among them."

"You know their language well."

"I ought to. I have been in Canada a full year."

"True; and there are some ill-natured enough to say that your heart is there still."

The same look of deadly passion which had shaken him so before passed over his face, and his hand clinched involuntarily. If a man had stood before him then he would have had only a short time to live. There was *murder* in his eyes.

"Who says that?" he muttered.

"I don't think of the person now; but that was what he said."

"Was it Seaton?"

"I do not remember."

"It sounds like Brady. If I thought so—if I was sure it was he, I would make him suffer for it."

"I repeat that I do not know who it was; I have forgotten."

"Let it pass. But remember to speak to your father about this."

"Yes. Are you going away?"

"Yes. The rangers are at Wood Creek. I am going there. Do not forget what I have said. Coldness to me, or refusal to come when I call you, may cost your lover dear."

"Are you a man?"

"You shall see that I am, and one bold enough for any thing. Give you good-day. I shall see you again on my return."

He left her standing on the parapet, looking after him, as he led the detachment of rangers left in his charge across the glaciis and into the forest path. As he disappeared, he gave her a warning gesture, which she understood. Henceforth, what peace could she have, knowing the danger which hung over her lover, if she rebelled against her tyrant?

CHAPTER IV

THE BATTLE.

THE messenger whom Putnam had sent to Munroe came back in good time and brought permission to make the attack upon Arnaud. Putnam at once put his men in motion, marching in Indian file, with silent steps, down the forest path. Not a word was spoken, either by officers or men, for they knew that every thing depended upon secrecy. For some hours they pressed on, brushing the grass with their moccasined feet, obeying the motion of Putnam's hand as he marched at their head.

Putnam had so directed his march that he would reach the place which the French designed to attack, nearly as soon as they. At this place some half dozen families had joined in building a small block-house, and united for common defense. The block-house was of logs, notched at the corners and covered with a green bark roof. The cabins of the settlers were scattered about in the adjoining fields. Here they lived in honest industry, contented if their hard labor sufficed to wrest a livelihood from mother earth. The Indians had once destroyed their cabins, but the whites had managed to keep themselves safe in the block-house, and when the foe retired built up with patient industry their devastated homes.

On the afternoon of this day, having finished their labors, they were seated at their cabin doors, when a boy who had been out for the cows came rushing in, white with fear. He had caught sight of the bivouac of Arnaud, luckily without being seen, and had at once made haste for the cabins. Martin

Hazleton, the leading spirit of the little place, sprung up and fired a pistol. The settlers, understanding the signal, started up in great haste, and began to transfer their more valuable effects from the cabins to the block-house. Men, women and children could be seen, laden with household goods, all making toward the same point. Casks of water were rolled in; half a dozen cattle followed, and they were provisioned for a siege. The men entered, each bearing on his shoulder a gun of some sort, a shot bag and powder flask being swung over the shoulder. Within the stockade, they had improvised a sort of bomb-proof, in which the children were placed, together with such of the women as would consent to such an arrangement. But, the women of these times were made of sterner stuff than the women of to-day. They could load and fire a gun in a masterly manner, and did it, too, upon occasions. And if they would not be allowed to *fight* they could at least load the spare fire-arms and make patches. There they stood, the grandmothers of our fathers, full of spirit, ready to do great deeds for the safety of their loved ones.

Martin Hazleton watched all, commanded all. He was a tall, spare man, with gray hair dropping down upon his shoulders, and a light in his eyes which nothing could dim; and yet, he had much at stake—a loved wife and daughter, the latter of whom stood by his side, earnestly regarding the preparations for defense, and lending a hand when needed. Kate Hazleton would not have yielded so easily as Ada had done, when Stephen Bates threatened her lover's life. She might have answered his insult with a blow. She was taller than Ada, with magnificent black hair and eyes, and a face and form which had driven many a bold hunter to the verge of distraction. But, Kate had a heart for only one, and that one was gay, careless Charley Brady, who, in times of peace, often obtained leave of absence, and visited the little settlement, when his comrades thought he had gone upon a hunt. But, one of them, smitten by the dark eyes of Mistress Kate, happened to find Brady there; like the friend of Miles Standish in the olden time, he was holding the yarn upon his hands, while Kate wound it in a solid ball, his black eyes looking confusion into hers. The man was a friend of

Charley's, and knew that there was no hope for him if the young Irishman had set his heart upon her, for he knew what to say to win a woman's heart.

So it passed into common report that Kate Hazleton was to be the wife of Charley Brady, and all agreed that a better choice could not have been made for either. The rangers were no paid hirelings. They were, for the most part, young men of the best colonial families, who fought because they loved it, and there was not a name better known along the river than the Bradys, of New York.

The reader now knows the reason why, as they came nearer the settlement, Charley Brady became flushed and excited, more so than the brave girl who stood by her father's side, within the block-house, waiting for the enemy.

The settlers did not have long to wait. One by one, dark forms began to appear along the edge of the woods, glaring with disappointed eyes at the empty cabins. These were the Indians, who always hung like a cloud upon the flanks of both armies, wiping out with the hatchet and fire all traces of human life along their path. They had expected to surprise the whites in their cabins, and howls of disappointed rage broke from the thickets as they saw that all had gained the shelter of the block-house.

They fired a useless volley, which expended itself against the walls of the block-house, and was answered by a derisive shout from within. But this was the signal for the non-combatants to get to cover, which they did with all convenient speed. Perrie Arnaud, who was in the rear with his Frenchmen, hurried up in a rage upon hearing this volley, and vented his anger on the chief, a tall Huron, with a necklace of bears' claws.

"What is this firing for, chief?" he demanded, quickly. "Have I not expressly ordered you to abstain from firing, except by my orders?"

"The white man is right," said the Indian, calmly. "But my young men are very angry. The Yengees have taken shelter in the big wigwam. How can we get them out?"

"Then they must have known we were coming!"

"The Yengees have birds that fly in the air, to tell them when the Hurons are on the war-trail. Many a time has the

chief gone forth to battle against them. Not many times has he come back victorious. The Hurons like not the big guns or the big wigwams. They can not fight against them well. Why is it that we did not come when the night was dark, and wake them from their sleep to feel the edge of the hatchet?"

"Chief, this is no time for talking. We must do something. I have been ordered to destroy this settlement, and I will do it. But, remember this: if they yield without killing any of your men, there must be no scalping after surrender. Mind *that*!"

"My brother is too hard on the Hurons. They hate the Yengees. Why should they live to make more wars. Let us kill them all."

"No bloodshed, I repeat. We have had enough of it to sully for ever the purity of the lilies of France. And yet, when I think of Acadie—poor, oppressed, down-trodden Acadie—of its people exiled, its roof-trees lying low, its cattle calling to the masters who will never come back—I can but think they deserve the worst we can give them. But as far as we can, we will save the lives of the English."

"I am not here to save life," replied the savage, shaking his hatchet in the air. "I am here to slay. I am here to strike and spare not. The Hurons hate the Yengees, who have done them all the harm they could. They will yet do more. If a Yengee falls into their hands they will make him bear the trial by fire."

"Make your boasting good, then," said Arnaud, beginning to get angry. "Take yonder block-house."

"My brother asks too much," replied the Indian. "His brothers, the Hurons, are not fools. They can not take the wrong house unless he helps them."

"Very well, then; we will help you," said Arnaud. "But, in the mean time, I will try what persuasion will do."

Attaching a handkerchief to a ramrod, he walked boldly across the clearing. The settlers saw him, and soon after the gate of the block-house was opened, and Martin Hazleton came out, likewise bearing a flag. They met about a hundred yards from the block-house, and shook hands, eyeing each other keenly; the old man—erect, military and unbending;

the Frenchman—polite, conciliatory and pleasant, after the manner of his race. As Perrie spoke English well, there was no need of an interpreter.

“My name is Martin Hazleton,” said the old man. “May I ask yours?”

“Certainly. I am glad to know you. Allow me to make myself known to you as Perrie Arnaud, a captain in the service of the Marquis de Montcalm, under his gracious majesty of France.”

“Perrie Arnaud!” cried Hazleton.

“The same,” said Perrie, with great politeness. “Perhaps monsieur the commandant has heard of me before? I am charmed to make the acquaintance of monsieur. Be seated, I pray. You are older than I am. It is a source of sorrow for me that I can offer you no better seat than this stump. But take it, nevertheless.”

Hazleton seated himself; Perrie did the same, and they measured each other for a moment with mutual sharpness.

“Yes,” said Martin, in a measured tone, “I *have* heard of you, and what I know of you is not to your advantage. You are a bold and unscrupulous man—one who, to serve your country, would do any deed, however odious in the eyes of the world. There is much innocent blood on your hands, Perrie Arnaud, which will cry against you at the last day.”

“Believe me, my dear monsieur,” said the partisan, “that Satan is not as black as he is painted, by any means, and that I am *not* guilty of half the crime attributed to me. But, let it pass now. I am here to ask you to surrender yourself and the inmates of yonder block-house prisoners of war, in the name of our sovereign of France.”

“Why should I do this?”

“If you do not, we will storm the place. I have force enough to do the work thoroughly. Consider, my dear sir, that if you shed the blood of my men, especially my Indians, I will not be answerable for your safety when taken. Therefore, I pray you to surrender on *my* terms. At best, no worse can befall you than the fate of the inhabitants of Acadie, that blight upon the English name forever.”

Hazleton did not answer for a moment, and a look of pain covered his fine old face.

"Sir," he said, at last, "I do not defend the conduct of our generals at Acadie. It was an inhuman, useless piece of business, and one I can not think of without the deepest disgust. But, because our country has done a great wrong, it does not follow that yours should do one likewise. What have we, living here in peace, to do with the wars and commotions about us? We wrong no man willingly. We make no quarrels, but we defend ourselves from attacks on any hand."

"I know nothing of this," said Arnaud. "My orders are simple. They say, 'proceed to such a place, take the inhabitants prisoners, burn the houses and come away.' This I intend to do."

"You will wait until you get us, I hope," said Hazleton, with a half smile. "We do not intend to yield without a struggle."

"But you are wrong," said Arnaud. "We must succeed; and, in the event of any Indian blood being shed, I am powerless to save you. Montcalm's policy is to conciliate the Indians in every way, and he will not have them balked. Besides, my Hurons are more than equal in number to my white troops, and I would not dare to make them angry."

"Then I will not trust those I love in your hands. If they chose to demand them, you would be obliged to give them up."

"I should not do it, if you surrendered to me," replied Arnaud, seeing his mistake. "In that case I would shed the last drop of my blood sooner than yield an inch to them. It is only in case of bloodshed that I would not undertake to control them. I hope you will be wise."

"I hope I am too wise to give you a chance to murder all in my care. No, sir; if you wear us, you must also win us. If you make us prisoners, it must be by fighting."

"Then we are wasting our time," said the Frenchman. "I had hoped for better things. I can only say that I pity the unfortunate women you have in yonder block. And let me say, if you love them, when you see that we are likely to win the day, as we will, kill them with your own hands sooner than let them fall into ours."

"You have a good opinion of your force."

"I *know* them," replied Arnaud. "I am sorry we can not come to terms—sincerely so. Let us shake hands, and say farewell. You are a brave old man, and as such I honor you."

"There are many things in your record which I can not overlook, Captain Arnaud, and yet you are a brave man. I give you good day."

They parted, one going back to the block-house and the other to the woods. The moment the door of the house closed on Martin, a great shout went up from the woods, and a line of French skirmishers began to show themselves in the clearing, creeping up toward the fortification. The settlers began to line the wall and pick off their foes whenever they could be seen. The only men whom Hazleton allowed to fire were practiced shots, those sure of their aim at a hundred yards, as the French skirmishers found to their cost. Many of them were wounded and two killed, in less than fifteen minutes, during which time the main body were forming for an attack. The Indians surrounded the block-house on every side, and kept up so close a fire that the defenders were forced to be very careful about showing themselves.

The block was one of those heavy, old-fashioned log structures, so common in those times, impervious to bullets, and only likely to succumb to artillery. But, Arnaud had said he intended to take it, and he was a man very likely to keep his word if possible. When ready, his men charged out into the opening with a yell, and crossed it at a double-quick, with the impetuosity which seems a part of the Frenchman's nature. The guns from the block played upon their ranks, and many a stout fellow dropped under the withering fire. Arnaud came first waving his sword above his head, and shouting to his troops to come on.

The ground between the woods and the fort broke into ridges, and the enemy were screened from view in the hollows, but exposed to the same deadly fire upon again coming into view. When within twenty yards of the works, Arnaud ordered his men to lie down in one of these gullies, while they gathered strength and breath for the final rush. They lay there, breathing hard, and looking down their thinned line, but never for a moment flinching. The men in the works

while they lay there, loaded all their spare guns, and were ready when the rush came.

Among those who had not sought the shelter during the affray was Kate. She had stood by her father's side, passing him up a loaded gun whenever he had fired his own. He complimented her on her dexterity in loading, and she answered with a smile, even while a bullet which had entered the loop-hole passed over her head with a sharp sound, which might well have terrified a woman. But Kate Hazleton was not one of the sort to be frightened by mere sound.

"What are they doing?" she asked.

"They are lying in the gully, getting ready for a charge. I can't see them at all. They are brave fellows; I hate to shoot them down. Oh, if those cowardly Indians would only give us a shot at them!"

"Where are they?"

"Lying in the bushes, and firing at us whenever we show ourselves. That was meant for me," he said, as a bullet went whistling by his ear. "But a miss is a miss. As long as it don't draw blood it is useless as if it had staid in the gun. Indians never make good shots, some how. Ha! I see one."

He passed the muzzle of his rifle out at the loop-hole, and took aim. Then came the crack of the piece, a yell of rage and a volley from the Indians, and Martin drew in his head with a chuckle.

"That Indian will never tramp the woods again, to scalp and burn and murder. I've no patience with them, and am proud every time I can fetch one of them. I am pretty sure of them at this distance, any how. Give me that small rifle, if it is loaded."

Kate passed up the piece, and he looked out of the loop-hole again. A commotion in the gully warned him that the Frenchmen were again in motion. He reserved his fire, and ordered his men to stand forward to their work. At the same moment the Frenchmen charged and were met by the combined fire of nearly thirty pieces, which swept off several of their number. The spare guns were ready, and another volley swept through them before they were sheltered by the walls of the block-house. Here they waited a moment,

hugging the wall to keep out of reach of the shot, and worked around toward the door, which was of stout, green wood. Several of the Frenchmen had brought heavy axes, which they now unstrapped, and began a desperate assault on the door. But it was a tough job; the spongy, cross-grained sycamore slabs of which the door was constructed, received the blows of the axes very much as a piece of gutta percha might have done, showing little damage after fifteen minutes' desperate pounding.

But, Arnaud was determined that the door must come down, and he ordered the ax-men to cut splinters from the logs for wedges. While they were taking what liberties they choose with perfect impunity, the weakness of the block-house showed itself. It had been found impossible to bring a gun to bear on the impudent Frenchmen from either of the loop-holes. Splitting pieces from the logs, they made wedges, and inserted them, little by little, with the evident design of forcing the door from its hinges. That they would do it, if allowed to proceed, was painfully apparent. Martin knew too well the wonderful power of the wedge, and determined to prevent its use, if possible.

"We must stop that," he said. "James, Farwell, George, David, Peter—follow me."

The men thus designated left their respective loop-holes and followed their leader to the ladder which communicated with the upper part of the block-house. When there, they removed a portion of the roof and mounted, not a moment too soon, for half a dozen French heads began to show themselves at the corners. Vigorous strokes from the butt-ends of the guns soon dashed them to the ground, and then the besieged got a shot at the pioneers. The roof of the block was flat, and a parapet ran round it, consisting of two logs, placed one upon another, over two feet high. The Frenchmen had been climbing by the ends of the logs, protruding as at the corners of all log buildings, making convenient ladders. At the first shot, the Frenchmen below snatched up their rifles and stepped back to return the fire of those upon the roof. But, this movement brought them in range of the guns in the lower part of the block, and they got a volley at once. Arnaud was in despair, and seeing that there was no hope, gave the

word to fall back, and the besiegers scampered away to the woods, with but little additional loss.

Perrie Arnaud was not the man to sit down and twiddle his thumbs because of a reverse. He at once began to think of fresh plans for ousting the English. The chief, who had prudently kept in the back-ground, now came forward with a plan.

"My brother has fared badly," he said.

"No need to inform me of *that*. You have taken good care of *your* carcass, at any rate."

"My brother says true. Shall we go back to our great father without a single scalp?"

"How can I tell? We will have them out of that if possible!"

"Let us burn them," said Chicopee.

"I don't think it can be done. The logs are both wet and green."

"Then let us make a great smoke, so that they can not see what we do, and while the smoke is thick we will climb on the roof and take their scalps."

"Can you think of nothing better than that? Take your men and assault the work, while we cover the attack. If you can once get on the roof, you have them safe."

"My brother asks too much," said Chicopee. "I told my brother before that my warriors are afraid of the strong wigwam. They know that the Yengees shoot very good. What can a poor Huron do if our brothers, the French, can not take the strong wigwam? Too much light. When the dark comes, then they will no longer fear."

"Yes, you would like to wait until Putnam comes, wouldn't you?"

"Putnam! Huron no like Putnam. He is under the care of the Manitou. Powder and ball can not kill him. If *he* comes, the Hurons will not stay."

"Oh, he is not coming," said Arnaud, who feared that the savages would desert him. "He knows nothing about us. But I must do something."

He went away and consulted with his men. They were furiously angry at their loss, and determined to avenge it. It was arranged to make an assault upon the place from three

sides—a party, led by Arnaud, taking the front, his lieutenant one side, and the savages the rear.

Chicopee agreed to do his best. Having found the advantage of the gulleys, they used them in working up near to the block-nouse, and then waited for the signal from the other side, where the lieutenant was preparing for an assault.

At this point the woods were very close to the block; this suited the Indian forces. They climbed the trees to a position overlooking the roof, and from thence kept up such a fire that it was almost impossible for any one to stay on the roof. Things began to look dubious. Some one *must* stay on the “deck,” or there was no hope. Martin called for volunteers. Ten men stepped forward promptly. These he ordered to the top, and followed them himself. By this time the signal had been given, and the two charging parties were coming down from opposite sides, bent on mischief.

A mad, wild, excited crew, shouting at the tops of their voices, and answered by the Indians in the tree-tops! Old Martin Hazleton, for the first time during the attack, feared for the result.

But, the rifles were ready and the balls began to drop in the ranks of the coming foe. In a moment they were up to the wall, and planting hastily-constructed ladders, began to climb at every conceivable point—at the corners, sides and ends. The Indians, seeing them about to triumph, uttered a resounding yell in concert, which made the old woods shudder on every side.

Mingled with the cry there came a responsive sound, which made the attacking party pause and look behind them in dismay. They knew the sound well, for they had fought the rangers upon many a bloody field.

The war-shout of Putnam’s men filled the forest aisles!

“Never turn back!” shouted Arnaud. “On, men, on!”

They pressed forward with loud yells, just as the rangers gave them a volley from the edge of the woods, which swept their ranks like a thunderbolt. The Frenchmen again hesitated, and looked irresolutely around. The Indians were already in full flight, scattering in every direction. Arnaud, angry as he was, saw that there was no hope. The cry went up, “All is lost,” and then the whole French force were seen

retreating in hot haste from the block-house, the derisive cries of the English sounding in their ears. As the woods received them, the rangers followed like hounds upon the trail. There was no thought of mercy then. When a Frenchman was overtaken, he was shot down without mercy, for the rangers had too many bitter memories to think of sparing such a foe.

And when the sound of the combat was over, only a few scattered men were seen in various portions of the forest. When the bugle recalled the English, these men gathered one by one, a forlorn band of twenty, hollow-eyed, wounded, weary-looking wretches, with Arnaud at their head. He looked from man to man, almost with tears in his eyes. A Frenchman, more than any other man on earth, feels defeat.

"My curses on Putnam," cried the lieutenant, who had escaped.

"Yes, mon ami," said Arnaud. "Let us remember. Let us put it down in our books, and swear by all things holy that we will some time take vengeance on that man. But this is not the time for idle words. Let us away and tell the great marquis how well you and I have succeeded in executing his commands."

"What will he say?"

"How can I tell? Though if I know the nature of the man he will simply give me a slow, sad look, and say "it is bad," and give me other work to do. He will trust Perrie Arnaud yet."

"And well he may. Who could have given Putnam the clue to our movements?"

"I can not tell. Some one has certainly done so. What if that English traitor, whom I can not like, is playing into the hands of the English? If he is, if I could only catch him tripping, nothing would afford me greater pleasure than to shoot him through the head. But we must be on our way."

He gave a signal to his band, and they started down the forest path, in the track of the flying Indians.

CHAPTER V

PREPARATION FOR THE MARCH.

ADA had sought her father the moment Stephen Bates disappeared, and told him what he had said in reference to the threatened danger, not from any fear of what might come, but to ask his advice. It was a subject which had troubled the captain for many a day, for he loved his daughter well. When she entered the room he was seated on a camp-stool, near the window, looking out upon the parade with a troubled eye. He was so engaged in thought that he did not hear his daughter's step, nor was he aware of her presence until her arm was passed about his neck, and her lips touched his cheek. Then he looked up with a start. He was a noble-looking man—much such a one as Martin Hazleton—with a grizzled beard and mustache, a clear-cut face, and a steady eye. He replied to the caress of Ada, and asked her what she had been doing.

"I have been talking with Stephen Bates," she answered.

A shade crossed his face.

"My daughter, you seem to be much in the company of this man. Remember that I do not like him, nor think him a fitting companion for my child. I hope you do not love him?"

"No," she said, quickly.

"Then what can you have to say to him so often? However, I will not press that question. What did he say to you?"

"He spoke of the coming of the French."

"Ha! He dreads it, too. And yet Webb, in spite of the fact that men of experience in these matters think the danger imminent, not only leaves us here with a force entirely too small, but takes away a portion of our best men."

"What men leave us, father?"

"Putnam's Rangers, the best men we have, for they know how to fight Indians. And how can our poor fellows, who

nave been brought up to fight Christians instead of those sneaking rascals, know how to meet an ambuscade as it should be met? March and countermarch—wheel and fire—in all these parts of army drill they are perfect; but, when it comes to real bush-fighting, they would be children in the hands of Putnam and his men.”

“I like the captain,” said Ada, laughing. “He is bluff, but the best-natured man I ever saw, and brave as a lion. Some of the ladies were speaking of a story going the rounds of the garrison, that he once went into the den of a wolf in the dark, shot it, and dragged it out by the ears. Do you think that was true?”

“Yes. I have heard it from the lips of a man who has known him from childhood. I don’t think he knows what it is to fear. But you were going to tell me what Bates said of the Indians?”

“He said they were surely coming—that, even now, the woods above this place are full of straggling parties, and no Englishman is safe. He thinks I ought to go to Fort Edward, and thence to Albany.”

“I rely upon his judgment in regard to the coming of the Indians, for there are few men who know more of the movements of both armies than this same Stephen Bates. But, I doubt him—I doubt him. I like not the look of his eye. There are those living who are ready to swear that when a man knows so well the language of an enemy, he has at some time been among them as a friend. Who can say any thing of the life of Stephen Bates before he came to us?”

“Father, you will not send me away from you? Since I have come here, you have said a hundred times that I made you very happy. Let me rather stay, and if there is danger I may share it with you. Surely I am not so fearful of danger as to leave you here and fly to a place of safety.”

“That is nothing. I brought you here, selfishly enough, to contribute to my own happiness. If this danger did not seem to me to be so imminent, believe me when I say that nothing could tear you from my side. But, there is no time to lose. What you have said to-day only serves to hasten my designs. I will send you under guard to Edward in a few days.”

"But, father, I wish to stay."

"Certainly not in opposition to my expressed wish, my dear. I think it entirely for the best that you should leave us."

"Who will be my guard, if I must go?"

"I will think of that. They must be men who know their duty well, and children of the woods. A squad of the rangers of Putnam will be the best. I hope they will return this way. Hark! What noise is that?"

"The men seem to be cheering."

"Let us go out and see."

They went out on the parapet, and saw Wild Jim crossing an open place about a mile away, closely pursued by half a dozen Indians. The strange man was coming on at a long, steady trot, equal to the pace of his pursuers, which seemed to carry him over the ground with the speed of an ordinary horse. His tactics were apparent, and the exercise of them had caused the cheering on the part of the soldiers of the garrison.

According to their speed, the Indians were strung out in the pursuit, and the moment Jim had lured the swiftest of the runners a sufficient distance from the rest, he turned upon him and dashed him to the earth if his gun happened to be empty, which rarely occurred, as he possessed the rare power of loading as he ran. He carried powder and ball loose in the numerous pockets which adorned his hunting-shirt, and the work of loading while running had become quite an easy thing. Thrusting his hand into one pocket, he drew out a charge of powder, which he slipped into the muzzle, as was easily done with the long rifle of that day. Next a wad was pushed in by the action of his thumb, the ramrod drawn and plunged into the barrel with all the strength of his powerful arm. His bullets were always wrapped in leather and greased, ready to be driven home. When all this was done, he struck the butt of the rifle on the ground, and it primed itself.

Just as Ada came out upon the parapet, she saw him turn; then the crack of the rifle sounded in her ears. She saw the headmost savage throw up his hands, and fall to the earth.

The ball was sent with such force that it passed through his body and lodged in the breast of the next savage, who

also came heavily to the ground, with a shriek of agony. The next moment Jim was again in full flight, followed by only *four* enemies.

They passed through a ravine which lay in their course, and were hidden from view. The anxious minutes passed, and they began to fear that the poor fellow had been overtaken and cut down, when he suddenly came in view on the shore of the lake, not half a mile from the fort. The captain would have gone out to his aid, but it seemed as if there could be no trouble in reaching the fort if he kept on. Still he lagged on unaccountably. He had climbed the bluff overlooking the lake, and stood with folded arms, looking downward. His rifle lay at his feet. All at once he lifted it and brought it to his shoulder. A sharp crack again sounded, and the rifle dropped once more at his feet, just as *two* Indians sprung up from below, and rushed at the undaunted man, with knife and hatchet ready for action. The other two, for obvious reasons, remained below. Jim never missed his aim.

A cry of mingled admiration and fear broke from the lips of the lookers-on, as they saw the attitude of Jim. He merely swung round on his heel and faced the enemy, still keeping his arms folded on his breast. His coolness disconcerted his enemies, and one of them threw his hatchet with an unsteady aim. Jim threw up his hand and caught it by the handle as it flew past, and hurled it back with an aim so perfect that it was impossible to avoid it. It struck the savage in the middle of the forehead, and with an expression of horror frozen on his face, he reeled, and fell over the cliff. The last of the Hurons was a powerful and determined warrior, who had been many years upon the war-path, and wore about his neck a necklace of bears' claws, taken from the beasts which he had slain with his own hand. He saw that this was no common enemy, and that if he conquered, he must put forth all his power. Instead of advancing at once, he threw up his hand in a deprecating manner, as he addressed Jim:

"Let my white brother pause and think what he is doing," he said. "Here are none but friends. The Hurons wished to speak to the Wild Man of the Woods. But his heart was

black against them—and see: of the seven he met, only I am left—Cocheco, the Huron.”

All this was spoken in the Indian language, of which Jim was master, having passed much of his time among the tribes before his wife's death.

“Jim does not like the Indians,” said the poor fellow, from whose face all traces of anger had departed. “Jim used to like them once, before they took *her* away.”

“Has my brother lost a friend?” asked the wily Indian.

“Yes. It was long ago, before my head got so light. I didn't kill Indians in those days. I liked them. But, when they took her, I don't know what happened to me. But I ain't your brother.”

“Cocheco is the friend of the white man,” said the other. “Why should we not be brothers?”

“Jim has a light head; but, he is not a fool. The skin of a Huron is too red. It is the color of blood. She was bloody when she lay upon the steps of the cabin. Then they took her away.”

“Squaw?” asked the Indian, in his short manner.

“Yes,” said Jim.

“Who did it—Indian?”

“Yes.”

“Scalp her?”

“No.”

“Then Indian not do it. White man! If Indian kill, he scalp.”

Even Jim, light-headed as he was, could see that the savage spoke the truth. The Indians always scalped the slain

“They took her away,” he said. “Why do you talk of killing. She isn't dead. Say it again and I will kill *you*. I ought to any how. Go away.”

The Indian had been edging nearer and nearer to the speaker during the dialogue, and as he said this, struck at him with his knife. A very slight thing saved the life of the white man. The point struck against a button of the hunting-shirt, and glanced, inflicting a long scratch upon the left side. Then he seemed to change in a moment. His eyes, which were dull a moment before, shot out their hidden fires. He rushed at the Indian, grasped him by the shoulder and waist,

whirled him, shrieking, overhead, and cast him headlong down the bluff. The moment he had done so, the vacant expression came into his eyes, his face became calm, and he stooped to pick up the rifle at his feet, looking vacantly over the lake, apparently unconscious that a fellow being lay crushed out of the form of humanity, under his feet. After a while he came toward the fort, looking up smilingly to Ada, whom he knew.

"You are like *her*," he said. "I like you."

The tears came into Ada's eyes. She knew the sad history of Jim. As he entered at the main gate he was surrounded by the soldiers, anxious to know how he had fallen in with the enemy. It seemed that, after he had left Arnaud, he had directed his steps toward the fort. But about three miles away he met seven Indians, one of whom fired at him. He shot the fellow down, and then ran for his life, followed by the yelling band. The result they already knew. Not one of the Indians remained to tell the tale. Jim broke away from his questioners, and was going to the colonel's quarters, when Ada beckoned him to come to her. He left his tormentors, for Jim did not like to be questioned by ordinary people, and came to her.

"Jim," said Ada, with a smile, "I am glad to see you safe. I was afraid you would be killed."

"Indians will never kill me," said Jim, promptly

"Why not, Jim?"

"I don't know. I guess I dreamed it out some time when I was lying on my back by the side of the river. I don't think I'll ever find her. But I'm going to look every where for all that."

"What did you dream, Jim?"

"I don't know as it was a dream. I was sure after it that a white man would kill me. I thought he was being held by some men, and I was held by some more, and he got away from them, and struck me with a knife. No, I don't think an Indian will ever kill me. That is the reason I am not afraid of a great many. There were seven of them at me to-day, and I killed them all. I hate Indians."

"Poor fellow. You should hate nobody," said Ada.

"Who says so? Does Put., or Charley Brady, or Willis Beaton? Willis couldn't hate *you*!"

A rosy flush passed over the face of the girl at this pointed reference to the young sergeant. Jim saw her confusion, and laughed heartily.

"I knew you liked Willis," he said.

"Don't you, Jim?" she asked.

"Of course I do," said Jim, indignantly. "There ain't nobody so good to poor Jim as Willis Seaton. That's the reason I like him so much. He never lets them bother me when I come to camp."

"Where was Willis when you saw him last?" said Ada.

"Do you like him?"

"Answer my question."

"I won't, until you answer mine," was the ungallant reply. "I won't tell where Willis is to any one who don't like him."

"I do like him."

"Do you like Steve Bates?"

"I do not," said Ada, quickly.

"I'm glad you don't. I don't like him either. He'd better keep his hands off me if he knows what is good for his health. He will get hurt if he don't. He ain't good."

"You haven't told me yet where Willis is."

"Down by Wood Creek. They are all there—Putnam and Willis and Charley Brady. I like them all, but I like Willis best. He never laughs at poor Jim."

"Do you like him better than you do me, Jim?"

"Yes."

"Now, that is too bad. You ought to like me best."

"But I don't. You are laughing out of the corners of your eyes, this very minute, only you don't mean any harm. I like you, but I like Willis because he is a *man*, and I like strong healthy men that can fight. A woman can't fight. I used to like *her*, though. She was the best woman I ever saw and now they have taken *her* away, where I can't find her."

"Poor fellow!" said Ada. "Why do you not give up the search? Perhaps she is lost."

"Lost! Lost for good do you mean? Don't say that, Miss Ada," said the crazed man, getting very pale. "I can't bear to think of it. I *must* find her. If I thought I

could not, I should die. But I am *sure* to find her somewhere."

Ada could not undeceive him. She had heard his sad story, and knew that for two years the wife he loved had been lying dead under the trees in front of his ruined home. But she had not the heart to tell him so.

"Are you not hungry?" she asked. "You have been in the woods a long time."

"Yes, Jim is very hungry. He don't have time to cook much now, it takes so much time to look for *her*."

"Then come with me and I will get something for you," said Ada.

He followed her to the captain's quarters, and in a short time he was seated at the table eating, as he always did, in great haste, as if he had no time to spare. While he was so occupied, Ada went out again on the parapet, and joined a group of ladies, who were eagerly discussing the brave deed of Wild Jim.

Two days after, a portion of the rangers returned to the fort, guarding the settlers, whom they had saved from death at the block-house. A portion of them chose to remain. They had too often faced the dangers of the wood to be appalled because they had been attacked by Indians. It was a common occurrence in those days, and they chose rather to risk the danger of another attack, than give up the fruits of their toil. But Martin Hazleton, although he would not leave the settlement himself, determined that his daughter should go to a place of safety until the storm of war had passed. It was hard work to induce the brave girl to leave her father, but Charley Brady's arguments were irresistible, and she at last consented.

"Because," said Charley, "if you don't go when I ask you I'll just walk into the next ambuscade I can find, and lose my scalp. And how would you like *that*, my dear?"

"Charley!"

"True for you, Kate. It's well enough to cry out Charley! but I'll do it, all the same, if you don't go with me to the fort. How can I sleep nights, if I know you are in danger?"

"I will go with you," she said. "I think you talk for my good, but I do not like to leave my father."

"He will not be any safer for your stay," said Charley, "and when you are once away, he won't have you to worry about, you see? So pack as many of your goods as you can, and get ready to come at once. Put. is tearing mad. Too many of the French got away with whole skins. That was the fault of Steve Bates. He couldn't be satisfied until he had let off his rifle, by accident, you know, and that set the Indians to lookin' for us. And when they found us, sure they didn't like our looks, for they cut away from us to the tune of 'Satan take the hindmost.'"

"I do not like Bates."

"A word in your ear, Kate—neither do I. There is too much in him that looks like underhanded work. He is always away by himself in the woods, and when he comes back the very mischief is to pay somewhere on the border. Who is he, any how? Can any body tell, bad luck to him? Let him never give me a chance to pick a hole in his coat. I'll do it yet, as sure as my name is Charley Brady, if the opportunity presents itself."

"Don't quarrel with him, Charley."

"Quarrel with him, is it?" cried the young Irishman, hotly. "Of course I will, if he only gives me the chance. But he is careful about it. He knows the Bradys are a quick race, and I am by no means the slowest of my tribe."

"You must promise me that you will not seek a quarrel with the fellow. He likes you none too well now. I can see that, by the way he looks at you."

"Do you think I want his friendship, Kate? I wouldn't take it at any price. But I'll promise you not to quarrel with him unless he seeks it himself; and if he does, woe be to his skin, that's all. But go you and get ready for the march. We have a long road before us."

They reached the fort without trouble, Stephen Bates remaining with Putnam, who had his orders to go to Edward after beating Arnaud. The party which guarded the settlers consisted of Charley, Willis, and five picked men of the rangers, men who could be trusted in any emergency which might arise. Captain Cadwell saw them come in, and was the first to meet them.

"Welcome, Willis. I am glad to see you. Do you know

I have concluded to send Ada to Edward, where she will be safe?"

"That was well thought of," said Willis. "How will she go?"

"There is but one way," said the captain. "You must guard her there."

A flush mounted into the cheek of the young man, as he said,

"Does she wish it?"

"More than that. She earnestly desires you to be her guard. You may be sure the girl appreciates your bravery, my dear fellow. Your actions are not hid under a bushel. You, and you only, shall be her guard."

"Thanks. Have you obtained permission from Colonel Munroe? Men are sorely needed in these times."

"He has consented. You go out to-day. Do you know that the strange being they call Wild Jim is here?"

"Indeed! I wish to see him. I am afraid the roads are not very safe. It would have been well, I think, to have sent Ada away before now. The woods swarm with Indians. Only our opportune arrival saved the settlers at Hazleton's Portage from destruction. Arnaud is in the woods."

"Is it possible—that fiend?"

"Do not speak in that way of Perrie Arnaud. He may be an unscrupulous partisan, but he is, at all events, a brave man. Do him that justice. If his men are sometimes guilty of excesses, so are ours. And the French can say truly that there is nothing on their record so atrocious as the conduct of our government at Acadie. Say what they will, there was no excuse for the outrage, whatever."

"I never defended it," said the captain, in a sad tone. "But here is Jim. What did you wish to say to him?"

"He knows whether there are many Indians between this and Edward," replied Willis, extending his hand to Jim, who had come up to them and stood waiting for him to speak.

"Jim knows," said he.

"Is there danger on the trail?" asked Willis.

"Injins every where," replied Jim. "No use to try to go on the old path. You'll get killed. But Jim can take you safe."

"How?"

"Not go on the main path. Jim knows a bridle-road through the woods that will take you safe to Edward if no one tells which way we go. But the night is the best time; not go in the day."

"Can he be trusted?" said the captain.

"With life itself," was the reply. "And will you show us this road, Jim?"

"Yes," said Jim. "I like you and Miss Ada. Very good to poor Jim always. Never laugh at him, you don't, but Miss Ada laughs out of the corners of her eyes. I don't care for that. She don't mean any thing wrong. Jim is very glad to help her."

"What men shall you take with you?" asked the captain.

"Men!" said Jim. "We don't want any men. Make too much noise. Nobody can go but Willis and Miss Ada."

"Kate is going," said Willis.

"Then Charley Brady may go to take care of her. That will make five, and that's enough. May be we'll want to hide in holes, and if we do, how can I find holes to hide so many people in? No, I won't have any men."

"I believe the boy is right," said Willis. "A few men could not do much good, for if we meet any force at all, it will be a large one, without doubt. We must manage to get along without them. Where is Ada? I want to introduce my friend, Miss Kate Hazleton, one of the bravest girls in America. Isn't she, Charley?"

"Of course she is," said Charley. "Not only *one* of the bravest, but *the* bravest. Don't blush, Kate. Her father told me how she loaded the guns while they fired. You won't find many girls who will do that, I guess."

"Charley *will* talk," said Kate, promptly. "That is his failing, the use of his tongue at unseasonable times."

"Now, Kate—" began Charley.

"Look at him now. He will try to make us believe that he is hardly ever heard to speak. Willis, you must take me to Miss Ada at once, and send this talkative person away."

Willis obeyed, and the two girls met at the captain's quarters. They could not help being pleased one with the other, and in a few minutes were seated, with clasped hands, talking

earnestly of life episodes, of future hopes, and of their coming journey. Just at night the party passed out at the postern of the fort, and struck off into the wood to the east. The girls alone were on horseback, and Jim led the way with long, rapid strides, while the captain looked on from the parapet.

CHAPTER VI.

A DANGEROUS PATH.

It was a beautiful evening in the latter part of the month of August. The balmy air, the rustling of the leaves, and the soft carpet under foot, seemed to suggest any thing but blood and death. And yet, amid such scenes as these, a thousand deeds of blood were done. Under this soft carpet weary hearts had been laid to rest, and a yet more fearful drama was to be enacted. As Ada turned to take a last look at the walls of William Henry, *she* could not know that, in a few short days, that work would be a blackened ruin, and that scores of the women whom she left happy in the love of husbands and brothers within the walls, would be lying on the cold ground, mutilated out of the form of humanity by the fiend-like allies of the French.

Jim led the way at a brisk pace, until the woods hid them from view of those in the fort, when he slackened his pace and turned into a bridle-path which struck out to the east, in an entirely different way from the one they wanted to go. Indeed, it seemed as if they must lose much valuable time by traveling in this direction. Charley Brady, ever ready to hazard an opinion, told Jim so.

"You shut up!" said Jim, sharply. "What is it to you, any how? I guess I know where I am going. Jim is not so crazy that he don't know how to keep away from Indians."

"Keep quiet, Charley," said Willis. "You will only get the rough of his tongue by interfering. He knows what he is doing."

"I'm blest if I think so, then," grumbled Charley. "It has come to a pretty pass when we of the rangers must be led by a crazy man! My plan would have been to take the straight path to Edward. It was only nine miles, and I know we could have got through safe. But nothing would suit you but to be led by this crack-brained fellow, who will take us to Crown Point as likely as any where."

Jim did not appear to hear him, but strode on in silence through the deepening gloom of the evening. Charley's grumbling subsided after a while, as he saw that their leader appeared to know perfectly where he was going. All at once he paused and held up his hand. There was just light enough to see this action, and all halted involuntarily. The next moment there came from the forest, apparently a mile or more away, a long, tremulous cry, which made the blood curdle in the veins of the young men, not on their own accounts, but for the sakes of the weak ones intrusted to their care. They had heard it often. It was the scalp-cry of the Huron!

"What is it?" asked Ada. "Why do you stop?"

"Jim was right," said Charley. "I beg your pardon, old fellow. That is the cry of an Indian, and it comes from the path we should have traveled if we had gone in my way."

Jim's face, which had been clouded for some moments, cleared up as he shook the hand which the young man frankly extended to him.

"I knew you would say so, by-and-by," he said. "But, we must not stand here and talk. May be there are Injins here."

They went on in silence. As the night grew darker, the young men each took a pony by the bridle. Jim had enjoined them not to speak, and they obeyed him, saying all that was necessary in a whisper. An hour passed, and they halted on the bank of a rapid stream, whose dark waters glanced down between high banks, closed in on each side by forest trees.

"You can speak now," said Jim. "The water makes so much noise that nobody could hear you talk if they wanted to ever so much."

"Do you think there is any danger, Jim?" asked Kate.

"Danger! There is danger every where. You can't go about in the woods without meeting it. I think we ain't quite so safe as I'd like to be. For the last half-hour I thought we were followed."

"Why do you stop, then? Why not go on as fast as we can?" asked Willis.

"That won't do any good," said Jim, coolly. "The fact is, they are all around us?"

"They!" cried Charley. "Who do you mean by they?"

"Injins!" replied Jim, sententiously.

"Do you mean to tell us, seriously and gravely, that you have been leading us into the midst of a band of Indians, and never said any thing about it?"

"Yes," said Jim, quietly.

"Why didn't you mention it before?"

"What's the use?" said Jim. "There is no other road. They have come away from the main path; some one has sent them word."

"It is impossible. No one knows that we left the fort except the garrison, and none of them would betray us."

"Sure of that?" asked Jim.

"Do you doubt any one?"

"Some one did it," said Jim. "'Cause if they didn't, why don't the Injins stay on the path where they belong, instead of coming here?—that is what I want to know. They have heard from *some* one that a party has left the fort, and is on the march by this path. I am sure of it. Hark to that!"

A succession of shrill cries, coming from the woods in various directions, warned them that the enemy were closing in on every side. What was to be done? The danger which threatened them was unforeseen by any one, and, if Jim's theory was correct, they had been betrayed.

"Curse all traitors!" said Brady. "I believe Jim is right, and that we have been sold by some Judas for thirty pieces of silver. What shall we do, Jim?"

"We must cross over," said Jim.

"That is easily *said*," replied Willis. "But how are we to do it?"

"Easy enough," said Jim. "Here is a canoe."

As he spoke he stooped, and throwing aside a quantity of

rubbish, showed a canoe concealed underneath. All uttered a cry of surprise.

"Whose canoe is this?" asked Charley.

"Mine," answered Jim. "I've got them every where by the lakes and rivers. How can I find her without a boat? So I have them ready, and when I find her, I will put her in the canoe, and away we go."

"Can we get the horses over?" asked Willis.

"They must swim it," said Jim. "See: You take Miss Ada and Miss Kate in the canoe, and let Jim take the horses over. He can do it."

They pushed out the canoe as soon as possible, for the noises in the woods were growing louder each moment, and no time was to be lost. The girls, placed in the middle of the canoe, were ordered to sit very quietly, so as not to impede the efforts of the men. Willis took the bow and Charley the stern, leaving Jim upon the shore. While close to the bank they did not feel the force of the current, but the moment they left the shelter of the woods they found that it ran like a mill-race; and it required a constant struggle to keep the head of the boat from drifting down-stream. Not two hundred yards away they could see the edge of a fall of water, which dropped seventy feet into a black gulf. The girls, awestricken, held their breaths, and watched the efforts of their lovers. Their coolness acted as a soothing power. Not a change in the face of either betrayed their knowledge of any danger impending, as they stood at either end of the frail craft, working the long paddles with practiced hands. The distance across the stream, perhaps a hundred yards at this point, really was a great distance, in the face of a resistless current. But strength and perseverance conquered, and they struck the shore at last, not more than fifty yards above the verge of the fall.

"All's well that ends well," said Charley, drawing a long breath. "I confess I felt pretty shaky for a little while. I thought we would go over the fall, *sure*."

"You didn't show that you feared any danger, Charley," said Kate.

"True for you, my dear. It would not have looked pretty for me to *show* it, and get you to fidgeting about in the boat,

and as likely as not sink the whole party. Willis did not show his fright either, when, if the truth must be told, he was scared to death almost. Tell the truth and shame the adversary, Will; isn't it true?"

"I *was* afraid on their account," said Willis. "Why deny it? Where is Jim? He will have a harder time than we have had, for he must bring over the horses."

"He won't try to cross too low down. Isn't it a wonderful thing that that crazed brain retains the knowledge of woodcraft for which he was so famous before he lost his wife. Ha! Look at that."

As he spoke, the shore of the river was lighted up by half a dozen fires, blazing up all at once. It was plain that the savages had been collecting material for the last half hour, and now lighted them together. Simultaneously with the lighting of the fires, came yells of rage and disappointment, for the flame showed them, not the victims they expected to see, crouching on the bank, but a bare shore, and in the midst of the stream a man swimming, holding one horse by the tail, and the other by the bridle, urging them toward the other shore. His appearance was the signal for a volley, the balls skipping along the surface of the stream, glancing from crest to crest of the little waves. But Jim pressed on undauntedly, though the current swept him downward, and reached the other shore in safety, close to the place where the others were standing. Wild figures could now be seen, dancing about in the firelight on the other bank, firing muskets at random, and otherwise deporting themselves like maniacs. Soon a commanding voice was heard. Willis looked at Charley.

"I know that voice," he said.

"Who is it?"

"Perrie Arnaud. You know he took me prisoner once, and I have good cause to remember him. We must be on our way. With Perrie Arnaud at our heels there is nothing for us but to depend upon our speed. That man will never stop at any thing until we are in his hands."

"He will remember the beating we gave him at Hazleton Portage, the other day," said the other, with a light laugh. "But, as you say, it is a dangerous neighborhood to linger in. We need not stop. What do *you* say Jim?"

"Frlnchman there," said Jim. "I guess he is a liar. He said he didn't know any thing about *her*. Perhaps he don't, but Jim don't like him. Let us go."

Their sudden crossing of the stream had defeated the Indian plan for surrounding them, but at the same time took them out of their course. They had now crossed the lower branch of Wood Creek and kept on their way, guided by the stream. Their course now lay through a trackless forest, and to move with safety, encumbered as they were with women, seemed a matter of impossibility. The girls at length became worn out, and Willis appealed to Jim to find a hiding-place where they could rest. He obeyed in silence, and turning sharply to the left, he led them to a place over which a whirlwind had passed, overturning the trees in every direction, tearing their strong roots out of the soil.

"Get under them," said Jim. "They can't find you. And if they do, I'd like to see 'em drive us out of that."

"You are right, Jim," said Charley. "Let us help the girls over. Can we get the horses in?"

"No," said Jim. "Take them out in the woods and tie them. If the Injins find them, we can't help it. They mustn't go in there. You stay here while I take care of them."

They sat down upon one of the fallen trees, and waited for him. He returned so silently that they did not know he was at hand until he spoke, and came so suddenly that the sound of his voice startled them.

"What shall we do now?" asked Willis, who, not knowing where they were, was forced to depend upon the young man for assistance.

"Get under the logs," said Jim. "Safe enough there, if you only think so. Jim ain't afraid of Injins. He will go and look for them."

He left them at the word, and hurried away, and yet so silently that they could not hear his tread. They found a clear space among the fallen trees, and there sat down, hand clasped in hand, waiting for whatever might happen. The yells of the savages were coming nearer, and they knew that the stream had been crossed. But, in the darkness, it would be impossible for their foes to follow them. While sitting

there, a peculiarly mournful cry pealed out from the forest, which made the girls stop their ears in horror.

"What is that?" asked Ada.

"An Indian is dead," said Willis, "and they have found the body. That is the death-cry which you have heard."

"Who has done it?"

"Jim. It can be no other. I think you would do well to lie down and get a little sleep, while we sit here and watch."

The girls were persuaded to do this after a while, and fell asleep. For half an hour, the silence was unbroken, and then came the sound of hurrying feet, the crack of muskets, and yells of rage. A moment after, a dark form bounded over the fallen trees and lighted in their midst. It was Wild Jim. His clothes were torn and bloody, his hair floating in the wind, his eyes blazing with excitement.

"They're a-comin'," he said. "Get ready your rifles."

The girls had started up in terror.

"Down!" said Jim. "Keep out of sight there. You'll get shot."

They concealed themselves behind the trees, and waited. Torches began to gleam among the trees, and they knew that their enemies were at hand. The "deadenings"—as the old settlers called a place full of fallen trees—seemed a proper place to hide, and they halted to look about them, not liking the posture of affairs. Arnaud, who led the party, advanced at once.

"Ho, there!" he shouted.

"Shall I answer?" asked Charley.

"No," replied Willis. "Send a bullet through him if he comes any nearer."

"We know you are here," said the Frenchman. "There is no use in skulking. Come out and give yourselves up like men, and get quarter."

Still no reply.

"Peste, man; don't make us trouble. We intend to have you any how, and why not yield at once? We shall be proud to take you in charge."

The echo was the only answer.

"Pshaw!" said the Frenchman angrily. "Do not keep up

this foolish farce. Yield at once, and the women shall be treated kindly, I give you my word. By remaining obstinate you make my men more angry, and woe to you if you shed any blood. Do not force us to look for you. We know you are here."

What more he might have said can not be known, for at that moment Charley Brady, whose temper got the better of him, fired a pistol at the speaker, by the action betraying their presence, which the partisan had begun to doubt. A yell of triumph burst from the Indians, and they rushed at the spot. Their torches made them marks for the fatal rifles of the rangers, whom they could no longer see. Several of the Indians were shot down before they reached the logs, where the pistols began to play upon them. The first onset was easily repulsed. The Frenchman drew off his men and surrounded the place, determined to wait until morning. Willis saw this movement with ill-concealed dismay.

"Leave us," said Ada. "We have no right to keep you here in danger. You may break through and escape."

"Not I," said Willis. "I hope I am not so base."

"Nor I," said Charley.

And so they sat down and waited calmly for the morning, which they knew would leave them captive in the hands of a cruel foe.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TRAITOR.

MONTCALM, when taking command of the French forces immediately after the disastrous defeat of Dieskau, in the vicinity of William Henry, had all a Frenchman's zeal to avenge the insults offered to his country's flag, upon that day and spot. Perhaps it was this, more than any thing else, that induced him to commence the siege of William Henry. The thought that he could lay that fort in the dust, which had been erected in honor of the French defeat, was pleasant to his heart. Montcalm was not a man to despise any instru-

ment whatever, and he had one in the English camp, unknown to any, whose information did more to defeat the English than all other circumstances. The plan of attack, in these times, seems to have been to cross Lake Champlain in boats, and thence to march upon the enemy. Montcalm came down, as usual, to North-west Bay, and there halted, while he waited for information. He had reasons for knowing that it must come soon.

Montcalm was sitting by himself under a tree, when an orderly announced that an Englishman, brought in from the outposts, desired to see him. Montcalm ordered him forward. He came, his face muffled up in a handkerchief.

"I have seen you before," said Montcalm. "You are the man they call, among the Indians, the 'Double Face.' Why are you here?"

"I thought you expected me," said the man, in a gruff tone.

"You had said you would come, to be sure? But is there any dependence to be placed in men of your class? Have they not deceived us again and again?"

"May I ask what you mean by men of my class?" said the visitor, still keeping his face covered.

"Men who, for money more than any thing else, are willing to betray those with whom they have broken bread, to a foreign foe. You will not deny that you are such a man."

"Have I ever taken more from you than enough to supply me with the necessaries of life? Have I not served you faithfully, toiled through the winter's snows to Canada, to bring you news of danger or of a chance to punish the English? I tell you, though you may not believe me, it is not for *gold* that I do all this."

"For what, then?" asked Montcalm.

"For a sweeter thing—*revenge*."

"You hate the English, then, strange man. I think better of you on that account. While I regarded you as a paid spy, I scorned you while I employed you. But this is different. Who are you?"

"I am one whom fortune has not used kindly. I am a man who has had reproach fall upon his name so often, that it is a common thing now. I no longer dread it."

"Uncover your face. I would see who you are."

"I beg your pardon," said the other. "I have sworn that no Frenchman shall see my face until William Henry is in your hands."

"Do you think we can take it?"

"How many troops have you?"

"Nine thousand, of all arms."

"You can do it with ease. There are in the fort only three thousand men, though Webb has nearly five thousand at Edward."

"He will send aid, then; we can not take the fort," said Montcalm.

"Not he. You have heard of Lord Loudon? Of all the imbecile asses whom the English ministry have sent here as commanders-in-chief, he was the most cowardly. And General Webb has *nearly* as much courage as the lord. He will just keep every man in Edward to take care of himself. They know you are coming. *Putnam* spied it out."

"I have heard of that man, Putnam; he must be a brave man."

"I serve in his corps, and should know him. If he were general of the English forces, you would indeed have cause to fear. But Webb has taken him away with him. He came up here on the first of August to see after the defenses of Fort Henry, and brought an escort of two hundred men under Putnam. The major is never satisfied unless he is on the move, and he took eighteen men up the lake toward Ticonderoga. But they saw your men here, and he set two of his boats to fishing, and went back to the fort. Webb wanted him to leave his two boats' crews to their fate; but Putnam would not hear of it, and went up to bring them off, which he did safely. So they know you are here. By the way, do you know that Arnaud failed in his attack on Hazleton?"

"Ah," said the marquis. "How was that?"

"It was Putnam's work. He got wind of the attack somehow, and came upon your men at the moment of victory."

"Where is Arnaud now?"

"He has gone in pursuit of a party who left William Henry for Fort Edward yesterday. He had picked up a force of Indians somehow."

"Who gave him notice of the march of this detachment?"

"I did, by means of signals; or, rather, one of my men did it for me during my absence. I hope to hear before many hours that Arnaud has returned with his prisoners."

"I shall be pleased to hear it. Of whom does the party consist?"

"Two of Putnam's rangers—the best men in the force, as far as scouting is concerned—Willis Seaton and Charles Brady; also the crazy boy known as Wild Jim, a daughter of Captain Cadwell, and Miss Kate Hazleton."

"A fair booty," said Montcalm, laughing. "You seem to know them all."

"So do I know every one at the forts. There are none better informed. I assure you that these young men are rare Indian fighters. One of them is Putnam's orderly sergeant."

"I hope Perrie may catch them. But about the fort. Is it very strong?"

"No. It would be child's play to take it, but for the officers in command. You shall find no child's play there, I warrant you. Colonel Munroe is a brave man."

"Where is Webb now?"

"Back at Edward. He is not the sort of person to remain in an exposed post like William Henry. And I have no doubt he is shaking for dread, lest you should conclude to attack Edward first. In my opinion it would be the best move, for the coward would surrender on the first summons."

"It might be well to consider what you say," said Montcalm. "Edward would be of more importance to us than William Henry, and I should like to take it right well. But I think we had better attend to other matters now. I should like to know your name."

"My name can be of no great importance to you now," said the other. "But if you will give me a card I will write it. For my own safety, I dare not speak it here."

Montcalm gave him a card, and he wrote a name on it hastily. Montcalm glanced at it a moment, and put it in his pocket.

"Do you go now."

"I think I will wait until morning. I do not care to travel in the night."

"As you will," said Montcalm. "Claude?"

"An orderly appeared.

"Take this gentleman under your care, Claude. See that he wants for nothing. He has given me information of the plans and numbers of the enemy. Good-night, sir."

"May I ask your name?" said the orderly. "Mine is Claude Janton."

"You may call me Jones," said the Englishman, speaking very good French.

"Which will not be your right name, as I think," said the Frenchman, laughing. "However, come on; I can drink as well with you under that name as any other. You are from the English fort, I take it."

"Yes."

"We will rattle their walls about their ears finely one of these days," said the Frenchman. "Ah, how I long to see the day. I was with Dieskau when he fell. It was a bloody repulse. We never dreamed of finding a breastwork and cannon until they opened on us with ball. Blood and bones! how the Indians ran! Our brave regulars stood up to it like walls of iron for a long time. Do you think it will be safe for us to attack William Henry?"

"I have already told the marquis that I think so. Where are we going?"

"The truth is, *mon comarade*, I have a few bottles of wine of my own, and I am going for them. When found, you and I will drink them. That is the fairest offer I can make."

In a few moments they were seated under a tree, and drinking deeply.

"Why do you not take that muffler off your face?" demanded the young orderly. "There is no use hiding."

"I think best to preserve my incognito," replied the spy. "Your health!"

"Where did you learn French?" inquired Claude.

"When a child I was taken prisoner in the colony of Massachusetts, and taken to Quebec. I fell into the hands of a wealthy man, who took a fancy to me, educated me, and

taught me to hate the people of my blood. That is the reason you see me, an Englishman, a spy upon them. It is not pleasant, neither is it an honorable employment; but I will do it to the end of my time."

"It is worthy of you. I am proud to know you. A man who can hate the English well is my man. Let me drink to you."

They filled their glasses again, and drank deeply far into the night. At early morning the spy pushed out a boat from the shore, and rowed toward William Henry. His communications to Montcalm decided the fate of that unfortunate work. The English knew that some one had given information of its weakness; who, they could not even guess. The strange man rowed swiftly until within a few miles of the fort, when he suddenly turned the head of the boat into a sheltered bay and pushed it far up into the bank. This done, he lay down upon the grass, and slept until late in the afternoon, on the day succeeding that night of peril through which the party from the fort had passed. About three o'clock he rose to his feet and looked sleepily about him, rubbing his eyes. As he did so, the bushes parted, and an Indian came out upon the bank by his side. It is impossible to conceive of any thing more fearful than the face and figure of that savage. His hair, uncut, was allowed to fall loose upon his bare shoulders. His face was painted in alternate colors of black and white. His leggings were fringed with human hair, and he bore at his belt a fresh scalp. He was very tall and well proportioned. He looked fiercely at the white man, and spoke in a short, sharp tone.

"Nat-o-man is here. What does the white man want with him?"

"Do not let my brother be angry with his friend," said the white man. "Have we not trod the war-path together? Why, then, should we quarrel? What does my brother wish me to do?"

"Why should my brother be any longer a snake in the grass?" said the Indian, striking his hands together, in a savage way. "Nat-o-man can not understand what his brother would do. Surely, if he has an enemy, he has had chances enough to strike a dagger into his heart. Let him do so, and

join our brothers, the French, and the heart of Nat-o-man will be very glad."

"Let my brother listen," said the other. "There is a maiden among the English who is very dear to my heart. When I have taken her I shall come away."

"Then why do you not take her?" said the Indian. "Go to her and say, 'Come into my wigwam. Behold, I am young, I have taken scalps, and the great chief Nat-o-man is my friend.'"

The chief evidently thought this the highest recommendation, and that no ordinary woman could resist such arguments. The white man was too great an adept in Indian policy to deny this, so he said:

"The chief says true. These are great things, but the maiden is very stubborn. She has looked upon another young man and loves him. She will not listen to me."

"Then there is only one way to do. You must take her by the strong hand."

"Listen: She is in the woods. The Hurons are on her track, and the young man she loves is with her. Shall he not die? I ask only a little thing."

"My brother, it is said. If the warriors take the young man, he shall endure the trial by fire."

The eyes of the white man blazed at the promise.

"Thanks," he said. "You are a friend indeed. What shall be done with the maiden who is with her?"

"If it seems well to my brother, she also shall die. Shall it be so?"

"No, no!" said the white man, horrified, to do him justice, at the bare idea of such a fate for Kate Hazleton. "I would not have it so. She is beautiful and young. Many would like her for a wife. Perhaps the girl might find favor in the eyes of a great chief."

"It is well," said Nat-o-man, proudly. "If she pleases me, she shall come into my wigwam. A great chief may have more wives than one. Was this the reason I was sent for?"

"No," said the other. "Only in part, as I may say. There is a heavy weight on my mind. Do you remember what was done by the river, when we found the woman alone?"

"I have not forgotten."

"It was her fault, after all. Why need she have been so obstinate? You remember I told you to go away and leave me with her. When you were gone, I tried to reason with her. She forced me to kill her, and I did it. I shall never forget—never till I die."

"The woman was a fool," said the Indian, calmly. "This is nothing. What is it that makes my brother sad?"

"That is not the worst. Since that day I can not keep her out of my head. Often, when I lie asleep, she comes to me and lays a cold hand upon my forehead. Will she never leave me?"

The Indian looked astonished. His passionless nature could not understand what there was in such a crime to murder sleep for ever. He had done as foul a deed many a time, and it never gave him a moment's unrest, and he could not see that it should act in a different way upon another.

"Lately, she is about me all the time," said the young man, in a hushed tone. "It seems to me that my end is drawing nigh. It must be, or why does her pale face look brighter each succeeding day? Do you know who she was?"

"No," said the Indian.

"You know Wild Jim?"

"Yes. The hand of the Manitou has been laid upon him. He has a devil in him, and has killed many braves. Nat-o-man has waited long for him, and will kill him when they meet."

"That was his wife I killed. He don't think she is dead, poor fellow. He thinks the Indians have her yet, and is looking for her all the time."

"Jim is very strong," said the chief. "He killed seven braves one day. Indians kill him now if they can. He too much brave; hate Huron. Get his scalp somehow."

"He is with the rest."

"Good. Take him, burn bad spirit out, and then kill," said the chief. "He no good."

"I will not harm him if I can help it," said the other. "I have done him injury enough, I should think. Can't we get along without taking his life?"

"No!" said the Indian. "Mus' do it."

At this moment came the signal for which they had been

waiting. The white man answered it, and for a while the woods were alive with signals, coming from different directions.

"They are coming," he said.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN BONDS.

WE left the young soldiers and the girls calmly awaiting the fate which they could not escape. Jim sat a little way off, calm outwardly, but in reality consumed by smoldering fire. He laid upon himself the blame of leading them into this danger, and was cudgeling his poor brain for a way of escape. Weak as he was on other points, he was an adept in all matters pertaining to the woods. Charley Brady was the one who chafed most at the idea of remaining there until their captors chose to come to them. The Indians built fires all around them, and sat down to wait for their prey.

"There is but one way," said Kate Hazleton, "and you must look the matter in the face. You can escape. We should only hamper you in your flight. Take Jim for a guide, and go, with the blessing of those who love you."

"Kate," said Brady, almost angrily, "would you counsel me to do a thing which is dishonorable?"

"No," she replied, boldly. "It is no dishonor. We are selfish in asking it. If you fall into the hands of these men, you can not aid us, and you leave no hope for yourselves. If you go free, you *may* be able to set us at liberty, and no doubt will do so. So let it be."

"Is that your opinion, Miss Ada?" asked Brady.

"I think as she does," replied Ada; "though I am not so brave as Kate. You must go."

"I can not bear to leave you here," said Willis.

"I command you to go," said Ada. "You have said you would do any thing I asked. This is the first time I have had occasion to give a command. Obey me now."

"That's right," said Jim. "*Make* him do it, I say. That's the way to do it. We'll get away and then get Put., and whip the Injins. We can do it easy. They won't hurt the girls, I guess."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes. Arnaud is there. I don't think he would hurt women. I used to think he would, but I don't think so any more. He says a Frenchman did not take my wife away. It was an Injin, I guess. I hate Injins."

His eyes began to blaze again at the very name of the hateful savages.

"It makes me half mad when I think of leaving you here," said Willis. "Let me stay. It is no more than death at the best, and death is nothing when it comes for your sake, Ada."

"No, no! Why need you die? Why need any one die? Go away and come back to save us."

"Perhaps they may carry you away where we can not find you."

"I do not know how that may be," said the girl. "There is nothing for you to do but make the trial."

"Then if we must go, it is time," said Brady, rising. "Good-by, then, Kate, my darling girl, and may God never forgive my sins if I turn back from following you, until I set you free, or am dead."

He kissed her and went aside, calling to Willis to hurry. Jim rose and looked to his small arms. Upon these they depended more than the rifles, for if any fighting was to be done, it must be in a desperate grapple.

The parting between Willis and Ada was not long. Both felt that it might be the last, and yet that there was no time to lose. A thrilling hand-pressure, the touch of lip to lip, and he stood by Charley's side. The girls sat down weeping, to wait in solitude for the coming of the morning, while the young men, hand in hand, pressed forward cautiously in the direction of the abandoned path. The fires served to guide them. But, Indians are full of wiles, and it was not to be supposed that because fires were lighted, they were near them. Far from it. They were lying in the darkest places in the woods, ready to pounce upon any unwary passer by.

But, Jim knew the men with whom he had to deal, and to the surprise of the young men, led them quite near one of the fires. As they passed, Willis saw that there was no one near. He understood the ruse in a moment, and chuckled at the boldness of Jim, in going so near the light. The silence of the motion of their guide was something wonderful, and which they strove in vain to emulate. His foot woke no rustle in the forest leaves. No twigs broke under them. He moved with the stealthy tread of a panther. They passed the first fire, and were speeding forward to safety, and Willis had begun to regret that he had not brought the girls with him, when a dark form rose suddenly in the path, and he caught the gleam of a musket.

"*Qui est la ?*" demanded a voice. It was one of the partisans of Arnaud. Without a word in reply, Jim sprung straight at the throat of the questioner, evading a bayonet thrust as he did so.

So rapid was the onset, that the Frenchman had no time to cry out before those iron fingers closed upon his throat. That savage grasp, once fixed, would only loosen with death. But Willis gagged the Frenchman, and then took Jim's hand from his throat. He slid to the ground almost without life, and they went on slowly. The challenge had been heard, however; other sentinels were on the alert, and unusual sounds came to their ears. The young men heard steps sounding near them, and knew that, in a moment, the bound sentinel would be discovered.

"Hurry," he whispered to Jim. The guide looked back, and laid his hand upon the mouth of the speaker. They were in a dangerous neighborhood, and such an irregularity could not be allowed by any means. Willis understood him and became silent. Half a minute after another hoarse voice cried :

"What is this ?"

They had found the bound sentinel !

"Run for your lives !" cried Jim. "Keep close to me. I know the way."

They followed without hesitation, and would no doubt have reached a place of safety, but for a little accident. They ran against a party of savages outlying in the bushes. The first

not aware they had of the presence of this obstruction in the path, was the sudden discharge of fire-arms and the whistling of a number of bullets close to their ears. The bullets were followed by a rush of savage warriors, with shrill yells; hatchets and knives flourished in the air. Willis fired a pistol at random, and struck one of the headmost of the enemy in the breast. He dropped without even a groan, so suddenly had death taken him. Charley was equally successful, and shot his adversary through the head. This left them even-handed. Each grappled with an enemy, the white men fighting in silence, and the Indians uttering sharp yells from time to time, to let their friends know where they were.

The man whom Jim seized did not cry out, however. As before the muscular right hand closed upon his throat with a terrible grip. There was no one near to aid, as Willis had aided the Frenchman. And when Jim at last released the savage, it was a corpse that dropped from his arms.

In the mean time, Charley had mastered his opponent so far as to throw him, and place his knee upon his breast; but the Indian had seized him by the wrists and would not loosen his hold. Willis was fighting, knife in hand, against a powerful Huron, who eluded him in the darkness and came at him with the agility of a cat. Both had been wounded several times, though very slightly each time, and were losing strength, when the sound of many feet, and the light of coming torches, warned them that the enemy was at hand. By the light of the first torch Willis sprung upon his antagonist and killed him by a single blow from his knife. Jim brained the fellow who held Charley. The latter wrestled himself free and arose. His friends had started on the run. He followed them. As he did so, a single rifle cracked. Willis and Jim ran in silence for half an hour, and then turned, out of breath, thinking Charley close behind them. They could hear nothing near at hand. Far away, the yells of disappointed vengeance came to their ears, from the spot where the Indians had found the dead bodies of their friends.

"Where is Charley?" asked Willis, in considerable alarm. "I am afraid he is hurt. What do *you* think, Jim?"

"I guess they shot him," said Jim. "Didn't you hear a rifle when we started to run that time? They hit somebody

with that bullet, because it didn't sing past my ear. He waited too long. Jim wouldn't have waited so long to kill *one* Injin. Pugh! I hate Injins."

"Poor Charley!" exclaimed Willis. "I am going back. This comes of forgetting honor, even for an hour. I am going back, I say."

"I've heard people say Jim was a *fool*," said the guide. "But he ain't such a fool as all *that*. What good can it do to go back? You will only get some of the same they gave poor Charley. Stay here. May be he ain't hurt, and lost us in the dark. He could do that, you know."

"But do you think he did?"

"Don't ask Jim questions," was the reply. "They make his head light. I don't know where Charley is. Let us go!"

"Where?"

"To 'Put.'"

"Do you think he will come if we ask him?"

"Yes. Put. is always ready for a fight. You'll see if he don't come. If Webb says stay, it won't make any difference to him. He will come just the same. He'll come all the more if Charley is taken. Let's hurry."

They turned away into the woods, at a rapid pace.

What had become of Charley? When the shot was fired after the struggle on the green-sward, he felt a stunning sensation run through his brain, and then he lost consciousness entirely. When he awoke to a sense of his true position, he was lying on his back under a tree, by the side of one of the fires, and a French officer sat beside him, smoking. The fire-light fell upon a fine, handsome face, framed in by masses of dark, curling hair. This was Perrie Arnaud. He saw that his prisoner had moved, and turned to him with a smile.

"Ah, monsieur, you are recovering. I am glad to see that you do not intend to give up to that rap on the caput. It was a hard one, though."

"Where am I?" asked Brady.

"In my camp," said the Frenchman. "Let me introduce myself: I am Captain Perrie Arnaud, of the French forces. You may have heard of my name. May I ask yours?"

"Charles Brady."

"Of what command, if I may ask?"

"Of Putnam's rangers."

"You have named a command which has justly acquired a reputation second to that of no regiment on either side in this quarrel, among those who know what fighting is. I would prefer, if compelled to make a choice, to take a private's 'commission' in the rangers to a captaincy in any of the silken regiments that follow such men as Lord Loudon."

"How did I come here?" asked Brady.

You were shot while attempting to escape. The bullet just grazed your skull and stunned you. Your comrades have escaped. May I ask whether your ladies have gone with them?"

"I will answer that question upon one condition," said Brady, raising himself upon his elbow.

"Name it," said Arnaud.

"That you promise to make them *your* prisoners, and not let the Indians get hold of them."

"Granted," said Arnaud.

"Will you give me your hand on that?" cried Charley, eagerly.

Arnaud extended his hand frankly.

"I am glad that you give me this opportunity," said he. "The Indians shall have nothing to do with them."

"You are very kind," said Charley. "Is it not almost morning?"

"Yes. It will be daylight in an hour from this time. You will be able to help us find the ladies."

"With pleasure."

The morning came, and Charley was able to sit up. Arnaud offered his arm, and they walked together through the camp, and down to the hiding-place of the girls. As they came near the spot, Arnaud touched his companion on the arm, and pointed them out. Kate Hazleton sat at the foot of a tree, with the head of Ada lying in her lap, and her curls dropping over her knees to the ground. Both were fast asleep. Charley approached and touched Kate on the shoulder. She awoke with a start of surprise, which passed away as she saw who bent over her, and changed to a glad look.

"Dear Charley!" she said.

"I am a prisoner, Kate," he replied.

Ada, who was awake, and staring wildly about her, questioned him by a look. He understood her, and said:

"He is safe."

"But you are hurt."

"It is nothing," he answered. "A child might have made such a scratch with a pen-knife. But I am not here for any idle purpose. I introduce you to the gentleman whose prisoners you are, Captain Perrie Arnaud."

Kate started at the name. She remembered that he had led the attacking party at Hazleton's Portage, and all the tales she had heard of him were horrible. But, looking into that handsome, pleasant face, she could not believe that all she had heard was true.

"There is not much in a *name*, after all," he said, seeing her surprised look. "You have no doubt heard of Perrie Arnaud as a man who delights in scenes of blood—as a man who thinks of nothing but slaughter; but, I assure you, I am not so vile as fancy paints me, and, with all his faults, Perrie Arnaud is at least a gentleman. You have heard of me?"

"I have," said Kate. "You remember making an attack on Hazleton's Portage, not many days ago?"

"To my cost, I do."

"I was there," said Kate.

"You!"

"The old man whom you met was my father."

"A brave old man," said Arnaud, warmly. "I admired him, even while forced to fight him. But, I got no good at Hazleton. Have all the inhabitants left that place?"

"You will excuse me if I do not answer that question."

"Pardon me, rather, for asking it. I should have known that you would betray nothing calculated to injure the English cause. Let us go to the camp."

He offered his arm to Ada, and escorted her gallantly to camp, while Charley followed with Kate, to whom he told the particulars of the capture. The French and Indians looked astonished as the party walked into camp. The French officer found a comfortable seat for them under a spreading tree, and excused himself on the plea of preparing for breakfast.

In a short time, he returned and conducted them to another part of the woods, where he had contrived a table from a basswood log, split through the center. The plates were pieces of birch bark. The food, trout from the neighboring brook, with corn bread baked in the ashes. But they had appetites superior to the lack of any little contrivances, and the trout were really delicious.

"It is seldom that we are honored with ladies at our board," said Arnaud, "and as it is a great occasion, let us celebrate it in a fitting manner. I have here a bottle of wine, sent from Quebec to Crown Point, which has been mellowed by the air of many a year. Let us drink a toast."

He produced several odd-looking horn goblets, and filled them. Then he rose:

"I drink to the Genius of Love," he said, "the power that is mightier than nations, stronger than kings—the power before which *emperors* bow their heads, to which all true men are slaves."

They drank the toast with a laugh. The pleasant manner of the Frenchman would have tempted persons far less inclined to pleasure than they were. It was the aim of Arnaud to show them that the world had not told the truth about him. He succeeded well. Ada could not believe him the bloodthirsty wretch described in the annals of the colony. This was true: he was a man who had the good of his country at heart, a soldier, who obeyed orders, be those orders what they might. And if, sometimes, those orders conflicted with his individual feelings, he had no option but to obey them.

They did not remain long in camp after the meal. A soldier brought in the horses which Jim had tied in the woods, and the girls were helped to the saddle. As there was no danger of an attempt to escape, which would only throw them into the power of outlying savages, they made the best of their situation, and chatted pleasantly with their captor. He was a man very fond of female society, of which his wild life had in a great measure deprived him, and he enjoyed their conversation immensely. After marching about ten miles, the party halted and made signals, which were answered from the direction of the lake.

"Where are we?" asked Kate.

"About three miles from Fort William Henry, and about a mile from Champlain."

"I wish we were safe in the fort."

"Safe! My dear young lady, you are safer here."

"I do not understand you; why should I be safer with enemies than with friends?"

"The enemies have it in their power to protect you, which your friends might not. In three days there will be nothing of William Henry but smoking walls."

As he spoke they came into an open glade, where two men an Indian and white man, stood waiting.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MASK OFF.

THESE men rose as they saw the party, and came to meet them. The white man held out his hand to the captain, who took it after a moment's hesitation.

"I have waited some time," said the man, who was the traitor we have seen in the camp of Montcalm. "Where are the other prisoners?"

"I have no others," was the reply.

An angry flush shot into the face of the spy.

"Do you mean to tell me that the young sergeant has escaped?" he cried.

"Through no fault of ours," said the captain. "I hope you do not find fault with the work we have done, monsieur."

"No," said the other, hastily. "You will forgive me, but I know that his capture was very important."

"To yourself?"

"To the cause. You have heard of Willis Seaton, the favorite scout of Putnam, who prefers his liberty to any commission in the gift of England. A brave man. I see you have his comrade."

"You know these men well, it seems."

"Why not? I see them every day."

"True. Why do you wish to meet us here?"

"I come for my own. You have a prisoner whom I claim."

"Who is that?"

"The lighter-haired one of the young ladies. She is mine."

"You are betrothed, then?"

"No."

"Excuse me; I do not recognize your claim, then. These young ladies are my prisoners, and I am interested in them. I could not give them up to you without authority."

"Listen to me, Captain Perrie Arnaud. That girl yonder I intend to marry. When I gave you notice of the setting out of this party, it was understood that it was a private affair, and for my reward of services rendered. Montcalm recognizes my claim fully. *You shall do so.*"

"*Shall*, Monsieur the Spy! That is a hard word to use."

"You insult me," cried the traitor, laying his hand upon the sword he wore. "You seek a quarrel with me, do you?"

"Not I," said Arnaud. "I seek a quarrel with no man, neither do I shun one. You must give me good reasons why I ought to yield up this lady to you before I will do it."

"Come this way," said the spy, laying his hand upon the arm of the partisan. "I do not wish them to hear."

Arnaud followed him to one side, rather sulkily, it must be owned.

"You do not understand me," said the spy. "You think I am a paid traitor; it is not true. Beyond my necessary expenses, I have never taken a penny from France, nor will I. I have always labored for the good of your nation, from the time I was old enough to understand. I love that girl. Without her, life would be a burden."

"Tell her so."

"Do you think I have not done so, captain? But she repels me. She loves the man my soul hates, Willis Seaton, and is determined to marry him. She fears me, but does not love me. I have sworn to her that if she scorns me, I will

kill Willis Seaton. She loves him so well, and knows my nature so thoroughly, that she dares not scorn me openly, hate me as she will."

"Well?"

"I warned her that she was not safe in William Henry, with the intention of taking her prisoner by your aid. Are all my plans to go for nothing? Do you mean to balk me in the very moment of success? I beg you to remember my services to France."

"I can not give her up."

"I will go to Montcalm."

"As you will. I will tell you what I can do. I know that Montcalm appreciates your services, while he can not applaud your private acts. For this reason, you shall have every opportunity you desire to *persuade* her, *frighten* her, do what you will, so that you do not proceed to actual violence. Does that satisfy you?"

"I must make it do so," was the moody reply. "I can not tell why you should be my enemy."

"I am not."

"'He that is not for me is against me,'" quoted the other "You do not like me."

"You wish the truth?"

"Yes."

"Then you are right. I have never liked you since I heard of one wicked deed done by you, which you have not forgotten. God never forgives the man who kills a woman, and you have done that deed."

"I?"

"Yes. Do you pretend to forget it. I never shall. A woman of your own race, a girl in years, the victim of your malice or fiendish passions. You know to whom I refer—the wife of the poor fellow whom the English call Wild Jim."

"You have heard of that, then! It is true; I killed her but it was unpremeditated. She drove me wild by her defiant scorn, I think, for I did not know that the knife was in my hand until she lay dead at my feet, with the blood gushing from her wounded breast. Why do you bring up that horror? It is deeply repented of, long ago. I would giv

up all my hopes to bring her back to life ; but what do such regrets avail ?”

“ You now know why I am cold toward you. No man who knows you would put a woman into your power. I will not, at least. But you shall have the opportunity I promised.”

“ Thank you. I am sorry you spoke of that crime. Curse my rash passion ! Why could I not have kept my hands from her ? Night and day, night and day, she follows me. I wake in the night, a cold sweat oozing from every pore, and I think I see her standing by my bed. How will it end ?”

“ She walks, then ?”

“ Walks ! She never rests. How can she when they gave her such a grave ?”

He turned away abruptly, and walked to the place where the prisoners were standing. Arnaud followed more slowly. The spy approached Ada and whispered in her ear. She turned pale, and followed him without a word. Kate called her.

Where are you going ?”

“ I shall be back directly,” she answered. “ Do not stop me now.”

She followed the spy to a place where a little clump of bushes ran down to the water's edge, hiding them from the view of the rest of the party. Here he tore off the muffler which concealed his face, and revealed the countenance of Stephen Bates.

The white pallor of that face appalled her.

“ You here !” she cried.

“ You see me,” he replied. “ Did I not tell you that the time would come when you would be in my power ? You see I told the truth.”

“ But, I can not understand. You here among the French ? You, who have been a spy in the service of England ? Can it be possible that you are false to your country, after all ?”

He laughed bitterly.

“ What a world we live in, Ada ! How your heart sickens at the thought of treachery to your country ! I have no

country. I disclaim all ties of blood and kindred. And yet if *you* loved me, I could be a *hero* in the cause of any land you called your own."

"Are you, then, a spy of France?"

"My vocation is a strange one. I am a spy of both nations, best appreciated by France."

"And you dare avow it?"

"Why should I not, my dear Ada? It does not change our relations, I think."

"Why do you speak to me? Do you think that I, a true daughter of England, can listen for a moment to the words of a man whose very life is a lie? Oh, shame of manhood! Shame to all good and true things! The vilest traitor who ever went unhung was but a type of Stephen Bates."

"Girl, beware."

"I have no fear of you, villain. A moment since, I trembled at the very sound of your voice. But, of the bad nature which could exult in treachery to my country, I can have no fear. I should be ashamed to harbor it for a single moment. Bear in mind that I never feared for myself. Now I do not fear for *him*. He is a *man*; you are a reptile."

The girl seemed to have changed. This was not the shrinking creature who had followed him at a word. His avowed crime had wrought the change.

"I am ashamed of myself," she said, "that I suffered myself to feel fear for a friend from such a wretched thing as you. Your power over me is gone for ever. I will not listen to you."

"Stop!" he said, laying his hand upon her arm. "Not so fast. You do not leave me so easily. I expected your scorn, but I have a way to tame even that. You seem to have forgotten where you are. If you were in William Henry, now, or in Edward, these heroics would not be so out of place. But, consider that you are my prisoner, and that your friends are in my hands."

"I am not your prisoner."

"You think so?"

"I know it."

"You should say that you do not know *me*, my young friend. You will learn to know me better after a time. Be

more complaisant. Do not insult me, for the time may come when you will need a friend in me."

"I shall never be a friend to you."

"Never is a long word. You will be my wife, friend or not, as you please."

"I say never to that, also. I will die by my own hand first."

"It does not matter," he said, calmly, for his cool assurance had returned to him. "You will not have a voice in the decision. You will be obliged to marry me, whether you will or no. But I will not say more now. You will go with us."

"Where?"

"I can tell better to-morrow. We camp here to-night, as the Indians wish to settle the account of our young friend, Brady."

"The Indians! What do you mean?"

"Oh, they have lost a number of men, and always feel better if they roast some one after it. I am really afraid Charley is in danger."

"You have been his friend?"

"Never!"

"You have been a comrade, at any rate, You have fought the same battles, marched together, slept under the same trees, and yet you can stand there and talk calmly of the fearful death in store for him!"

"Bear in mind that I never liked him. He suspected me, somehow, and was always on the watch to catch me tripping. I think I am even with him now."

"You can save him."

"I will not do it, however. Don't think you can bribe me to do *that*. If you were to give me your word to marry me, I might be disposed to help you, but I am not sure."

"You are a miscreant—do you hear me?" she cried, almost beside herself. "You are a cowardly murderer. I believe the stain of blood is on your soul."

He started violently. It seemed as if every one delighted in touching that sore spot that day. He broke out again, and grasped her arm so roughly that she uttered a scream. The captain had been pacing up and down on the shore, a little way off, and when he heard that cry, he pushed aside the bushes

and sprung in, sword in hand. Stephen drew his own sword quickly, and stepped back.

"Don't interfere," he hissed. "I have borne enough already. I can not bear more. Keep back, if you set a value on your life."

He retained a grasp on Ada's arm with his left hand.

"Release the lady!" said the Frenchman. "My promise did not extend as far as that. Take your hand from her arm!"

"You promised not to interfere."

"Release her, or I will run you through the body."

"You might find that somewhat difficult to do, my friend," retorted Stephen, angrily. "However, to suit you, let her go for the present."

"Return to the camp," said the captain to Ada.

"You will not fight with him?" she asked.

"One can not always say," replied the partisan, with a laugh. "That will depend upon his conduct. In the mean time, you had better leave us."

She returned slowly, and the two men, holding their drawn swords, with the points lowered, glared at each other with angry eyes. Each had a perfect knowledge of the other's power as a swordsman, and Arnaud had no right to command Bates.

"Is this the way you keep your promise?" said the latter, leaning on his sword. "You gave me your word that you would not interfere."

"There was a condition attached," said Arnaud. "You heard it. You had liberty to threaten her all you wished, to cajole, to reason, but not to lay hands upon her. I will not see that done by any man, be he whom he may."

"You will interfere once too often," cried Bates, grinding his teeth. "How am I to make her yield, if she knows that I can not go beyond talking? There must be some force used."

"She is my prisoner. I will do with her as I wish. You have no power over her."

"Be careful what you do, Captain Arnaud; Montcalm shall right me."

"*Montcalm* has not the power to force me to a dishonourable

action," was the cool reply. "Nor would he do it. But you waste time. I have told you what you can do, and by all the saints, you shall not go a step beyond."

"You will force me to use the power I have," said Stephen. "Have you forgotten what that is?"

"*Your* power? I am not aware that you have any here."

"You mistake. Perhaps you did not notice in whose company I was when you came."

"The chief! You would not awaken their mad passions? You know how hard they are to put to rest."

"I care not. You would do well to reflect before you push me to do it. What is your power among them to that of the 'Double Face'? I want you to give me more power over this girl."

"You dare not ask me that, monsieur. Do not awaken a fire which you can not extinguish. You, of all others ought to know what it is to rouse the passions of the Indian."

"You recognize the power I have," said Stephen, grimly. "You shall feel it, too, if you do not at once give me the right to force this woman to do as I say. What can you do? You have twenty of your own men. There are a hundred Hurons at my call. My Indian education has taught me what to do. What do you say?"

"I have given my word to protect this poor girl. The word of a French gentleman is never broken. I will not give her up."

"This is your decision?"

"It is."

"You will not change it?"

"No."

"I wish to warn you. I have not pursued this girl so long that I will suffer her to be taken from me without a struggle. I will use *any* means, I care not what those means may be, to get her. Under these circumstances, I do not think it policy for you to persist in your refusal to give me aid."

"I do persist, however. I have no option in the matter; none whatever. I have told you my word is pledged."

"So be it," said Stephen, turning on his heel. "You have made your election."

Arnaud looked after him with a sigh, and remained some time in thought, with the point of his sword resting on the sod, debating whether it would not be best to run the villain through the body, and so put the matter beyond question.

CHAPTER X.

THE SACRIFICE DEMANDED.

STEPHEN strode hastily away to find the chief. Nat-o-man was seated under a tree, smoking placidly, and regarding the prisoners under the trees very little. Stephen sat down by his side, and for a few moments smoked in silence, thinking how to begin to rouse the passion of the chief.

"I have been talking with the French captain," he said at length, "and he has made the heart of the 'Double Face' very sad. He will not give up the woman."

Nat-o-man said nothing.

"That is not all. The chief knows well that if the Hurons had not been on the trail, the white men could not have been taken, for the French are slower than turtles. The prisoners should be the prize of Nat-o-man."

"They *are*," said the chief, speaking for the first time.

"But the Frenchman says they are his."

"How can that be?" said the Huron. "My young men will not listen to that. We must have them all. The Yengee man must endure the trial by fire."

"The French will not give him up."

The eyes of the savage began to gleam. His fingers dropped to the handle of his knife.

The French have always been just to Nat-o-man," said he. "It is not time for them to begin to act otherwise now. Let them beware what they do."

"You should go and speak to the captain now," said Bates.

He had a double motive in urging this. In the first place, he knew that Arnaud, in his present angry temper, would be very likely to say something to the savage that would make him

angry, and thus precipitate the crisis. Next, he did not deem their position safe. He knew that Willis Seaton would not fail to bring help from the rangers, and there was no time to spare. Nat-o-man swallowed the bait, and rising with that stately mien which is a distinguishing characteristic of the Indian sachem, he walked to the spot where Arnaud was yet standing. The captain had seen Stephen speaking with him, and it exasperated him, as Stephen supposed it would do, so that he was in any thing but a happy mood for receiving the demand of the Indian.

"I am glad to meet my brother now," said Nat-o-man. "Has he ever heard his father, Montcalm, speak of the chief Nat-o-man?"

"Who has not heard of Nat-o-man?" said the other. "He is a great chief."

The Indian inclined his head slightly, taking the compliment as his right.

"My brother speaks well," he said. "Nat-o-man has done something for his French brothers. He is glad of it; he is ready to do more. But, in battle, some young men must be killed. Last night some of my young men fell. They were great braves. There will be sorrow in the Huron villages when we go back and tell them that they are no more. But, braves can not go to the happy hunting-grounds unless there is a fire lighted to show them the way."

"Let the chief light his fires, then, that the braves may have light," replied Arnaud.

"My brother is very good. He is a war-chief. He knows what is good for his Indian braves. They want a Yengee to put in the fire, that the path may be *very* light," continued the chief.

"It is well," said Arnaud. "My brothers need a Yengee. Let them *take* one."

"They *have* one," said the chief.

"I have not seen him," said Arnaud, in affected surprise. "The Hurons have kept him hid."

"Does my brother forget?" said the chief, pointing at Charley Brady. "*That* is the Yengee my young men would put in the fire."

"My brothers, the Hurons, are not quick enough to catch

a Yengee for themselves," said the Frenchman, with a sneer. "They want me to *give* them one."

"No," replied the chief, a bright light coming into his eyes. "My brother does not speak good words to me. This Yengee is *ours*."

"My brother is wrong. The young man was shot by *me*, and one of *my* young men was the first to lay hands upon him. How can the chief say that he belongs to the Hurons?"

"Listen," said Nat-o-man. "We have been many days upon the war-path, and have taken but one scalp. We have lost many braves. Can we go back to the Huron villages with empty belts. The French promised us many things. They said we should slay the Yengees and that they should cease for ever from the land of the Indians, and lo! when we would do as they said, the Frenchmen tie our hands. We will not have it so."

"The chief is wrong," replied the partisan captain. "When the Hurons take prisoners themselves, they may do with them as they please. But who gave them the right to ask for *ours*, as if all things were theirs? They ask too much."

"Are the Hurons dogs?" cried Nat-o-man, stamping angrily upon the earth. "Shall they go forth to battle and bring nothing back but their own blood? This it is to bring white men into the land of the Indian. The white men hate each other; but they join to do wrong to the Indian. These Yengees are ours, and we will have them. Listen: We only ask our own. If the bullet of my white brother brought down the Yengee, was it not a Huron who fought with him?"

"Do you ask more than the man?"

"Yes. The man we will burn. The 'Fair Hair' is for my brother, the 'Double Tongue,' who does no wrong to the Indians."

"I will cut out his tongue," said Arnaud, "since he allows it to wag against the interest of France. But, you can not have these prisoners. They are not yours. The women surrendered to *me* and not to you, and you have not the least claim over them."

"We shall see," said the chief, in an angry tone. "There is but one thing for the Hurons to do."

"And what is that?"

‘To take what is their own.’

“You will have to fight for it,” shouted Arnaud. “To
men!”

The last order was intended for his men, and every man sprung for his gun. Nat-*o*-man uttered a shrill cry, followed by an order in the Indian language. To their surprise, however, the Indians found themselves at a decided disadvantage.

When they first entered the glade, they had stacked their guns in imitation of the French, and strolled away to various points in the woods. At the cry of the chief, they, too, sprung for their arms. But, the sturdy band of French had formed a solid square about it, and their gleaming guns and bright bayonets guarded it on every side. It was a strange scene, but no rare one in these troublesome times. In the center of that determined band of Frenchmen, holding their own with the tenacity of the Old Guard, at Waterloo, stood the trembling women.

“Give me a gun,” cried Charley. “We will fight it out, and I give you my word of honor not to attempt an escape.”

“You give your word? Give him a weapon, Dugard,” cried Arnaud. “There is a strong arm added to our side. We will make these whelps of Hurons rue the day they tried to turn traitor at a traitor’s call. I see you, Stephen Bates! God aid you, if I ever get within sword’s length of you.”

The sergeant gave Charley a gun, pouch, shot-belt and knife, and he felt himself a man again. He looked about at the dark circle of scowling faces, and felt a thrill at his heart as he thought what would be their fate if taken now. Unluckily for them, many of the savages had bows and arrows. After the first alarm, they fled to the bushes encompassing the glade, and began a galling fire from their long bows. One man was shot through the heart, and two badly wounded, before the partisans would retire from the position they had taken. This left the arms of the Indians at their disposal, and while the Frenchman was taking up a position in the woods, they crawled back and got to their guns. While they were having a jubilee over this acquisition, Arnaud was at work making a temporary breastwork, facing shoreward, upon a high bluff near the lake. The breastwork was made of fallen trees, branches, sods and stones picked up indiscriminately

along the bank. By the time the savages were ready for the attack, the Frenchmen, aided by Charley, had formed a respectable shelter from the shots of the enemy. Close to the edge of the bank, which was some forty feet high, and nearly perpendicular, there was a cavity about eight feet in depth, and as many in width and length, into which the girls were obliged to descend. Ada did it willingly, but Kate demurred. She wanted to stay and see the fight. The French cheered her lustily, when they understood why she did not wish to go into the cavity, but insisted that she should keep out of danger. Though she at last consented to descend, she was putting herself in constant jeopardy throughout the fight, by peeping out. Just before the attack, she called to Charley.

"I wish you would give me a pistol," she said.

"What do you want with a pistol, dear Kate?" he asked.

"I shall feel safer if I have it. Please get me one, Charley."

He went to Arnaud and preferred the request. The Frenchman was gallant enough to place one of his own pistols at her disposal, a beautiful weapon for its day.

"You can depend upon that pistol, my dear mademoiselle," he said. "They are sure at twenty paces in a practiced hand. I myself, within the walls of Paris, shot a man at forty paces, with the one you hold in your hand. It was in a street insurrection, mademoiselle, and, as a matter of course, I was in the barricade. I—"

At this moment a yell broke from the savages in front, and with a hasty excuse, Arnaud hurried away to the breastwork. By this time, the Indians were swarming in the bushes in front of the place, but having a wholesome dread of the guns of the Frenchmen, merely adhered to bush-fighting, which was much against the advice of Stephen Bates. About an hour was wasted, resulting in the death of four or five of the savages, and a flesh-wound on the part of Sergeant Dugard. The defenders of the place could hear the voice of the traitor now and then, calling upon the chief to order his men to charge, instead of wasting time in such a foolish way. He knew that every moment so lost made the chance that Willis Seaton would be down upon them with the rangers more

certain. At last he prevailed upon the chief to order a charge.

"Look out," cried Charley. "They are in earnest this time. Look out for a charge."

"Why do you think so?"

"They are getting careless. Kate, my dear, go back! You will get hit if you are not careful."

"I don't think there is any danger in just looking on," replied Kate, who was standing on a large stone, with a pistol in her hand. "I *can't* keep down here as Ada does."

"I'm afraid to look out," expostulated Ada. "How *can* you, Kate Hazleton?"

"Oh, it is easy enough," said Kate, "when one is used to it. You know I have been in a fight before, my dear, and I have enough Irish blood in my veins to like a row. What are they going to do, Charley?"

"They are going to charge," replied Charley. "Keep out of sight, I beg of you."

She disappeared for a moment, but as soon as Charley turned to the front, put up her head to watch. The truth was, a great part of her anxiety was for him. She saw him, cool and self-reliant, load his gun and pistols carefully and quickly, loosen his knife in its sheath, and prepare for the struggle which he knew was coming. Just then the Indians raised a tempest of yells to mask their charge, and then broke suddenly out of the thicket and came at the barricade at full speed. Arnaud had divided his men into two parties. The moment the first heads appeared, ten guns cracked, and as many messengers of death were on their way into the forest. The Indians staggered; but, being convinced that the dreaded guns were now empty, they came on again, only to be decimated by the second volley. They paused at that and dropped to the earth, creeping like serpents toward the barricade, harassed by the shots of the defenders. Urged on by their chief and Stephen Bates, the Hurons fought as Indians rarely do in a close encounter, pushing on in a determined manner notwithstanding so many of their number lay dead or wounded on the sod. As yet, they had been able to inflict but little injury on the defenders, who fought under cover of their breastwork. But as they came nearer, and were able to aim

with more accuracy, their fire was more severe. Two or three Frenchmen dropped, and blood was flowing from the wounds of several more. When near enough to the breastwork, the savages, still following the orders of Bates more than those of their chief, laid down their guns, drew their knives and hatchets, and charged with fearful yells, which struck terror to the hearts of the frightened girls, and made even the bold hearts of the defenders of the place feel a pang very much like fear. That passed in a moment, and they stood up to the defense of the place, as their descendents, in later years, stood up at Waterloo.

To describe the combat at this point would need the pen of a Victor Hugo: *then* we might *feel* its fierceness. It was a close, determined grapple—seventy men to eighteen. But the eighteen had a breastwork, and, more formidable still, the terrible bayonet. As, not long ago, Frenchmen stood upon the barricades, in the streets of Paris, and fought ten to one, so these men fought. Above the din, the commanding voice of Arnaud, the cheerful shout of Charley Brady, and the bitter accents of Stephen Bates, could be heard loudest. Man after man fell on either side, and the Indians had not been able to win the barricade. But, that forlorn band of French heroes were reduced to ten. For what were they fighting? Honor! Their leader had pledged his word to protect the prisoners, and the Frenchmen would die to keep the faith of gentlemen.

“Ada,” said Kate, with flashing eyes, “say what you will of Frenchmen, they have my love from this hour.”

“Why don’t you come down?” said Ada. “Do you want to be shot?”

“I *must* see. Charley is brave; he exposes himself too much. So does that brave Captain Arnaud. Never believe slander again while you live, Ada. He is a brave man; but he is not braver than Charley.”

All this time Arnaud was shouting to his men, “Strike, Frenchmen, strike! Remember you have women to defend, and do not slacken.”

Stephen Bates, though a villain, was an able and determined one. He fought, sword in hand, before the barricade, and two Frenchmen already had fallen before his trenchant

blade. Arnaud and Charley were fighting with a single purpose—that of cutting a way to this man. He saw their design, and tried to give them an opportunity. But the crowd of Indians prevented. At last the savages made a most determined rush, and won the barricade. The Frenchmen retreated to the verge of the hill, and formed a rampart of locked bayonets before the chasm in which the girls lay hidden. Cries, groans and pistol-shots were heard. The voice of Nat-o-man rose fiercely on the breeze.

In the midst of this tumult, the ranks of the savages parted to the right and left, as a man, wielding above his head a knife reeking with blood, broke through and took his stand by the side of Charley. It was Wild Jim. His eyes gleamed with a new light, and he grasped the hand of his friend with a spasmodic grip, while he replaced the gory knife in his belt.

“Hold out five minutes,” he cried, “and Putnam will be here.”

The Frenchmen cheered, as the Indians, under the repeated orders of Bates, struck at their leveled bayonets, to turn them aside. That last determined rush would have succeeded, if it had not been for the strong man added to the force. He stood in front, whirling his gun over his head, holding it by the barrel. Three blows, and as many Indians were prostrate on the sod. They gave way before that terrible arm, for all saw that the man had no fear of death.

But, the odds still were too great for the Frenchmen, and they were dropping man by man. Their ranks were broken, and the struggle became hand to hand.

At this moment came the sound of a bugle—the rangers were at hand. Putnam's men! How often these same Hurons had fled before them! They broke at the first blast, and fled. Charley, struggling with the chief, got his knife hand free, and struck a random blow. The blade found its way through the back of the savage, and he dropped. The assailants of Arnaud fled. None of the combatants remained save Jim and his antagonist, Stephen Bates, whom he had seized as he attempted flight. They rushed to seize him; in good time, too, for the iron hand already had closed upon his throat. He rose gasping, and looked from man to man, in a sort of maze.

In the mean time, the rangers were busy in the woods, picking off straggling Indians. Putnam and Willis hurried into the glade, where they found that strange group, Charley and Arnaud holding a sullen, dark-browed man, and Wild Jim looking at them with wondering eyes.

"What is this?" cried Putnam, quickly. "Why do you hold Bates?"

"He is the traitor," replied Charley, "who has done so much harm."

"It can not be," cried the impetuous Putnam. "I have trusted that man—I would have trusted him with my life. Speak, Stephen. Say that this is a lie."

"It is true," said Stephen, gloomily.

"True! Do you tell me, then, that you are a traitor and spy? Then God forgive you and have mercy on you, for you are a dead man."

"I expect it," said Bates. "I have counted the cost, and shall not shrink from the penalty."

"I shall not waste words upon you, sir spy. You have been my friend, and I shall see you die, with sorrow for the man, and detestation for the traitor to his flag. What is it, Jim?"

The madman had been fidgeting uneasily while Putnam was speaking, and looking as if he wished to ask a question.

"Ask him what he has done with *her*," said Jim, pointing his finger at the traitor. "*He* knows."

"Fool!" shouted Bates, "*I* killed her. Do you hear—I killed her! Your wandering is at an end."

A strange pallor came into the face of Jim—a look which those who saw never forgot. He had counted on finding his darling. His poor, crazed brain could take in no other thought; now he realized that she was *dead*."

"You killed her? *You*?"

"Yes," replied Bates. "I killed her; I may as well confess. Curse you, Seaton; you shall never live to witness my fall."

As he spoke, he wrested himself free and snatched a knife from Charley. So sudden was the movement that no one had time to seize him. The weapon was raised above the breast of Willis Seaton, when a pistol cracked and the arm dropped,

pierced by a pistol-bal. At the same moment, a clear voice said :

"This is a good pistol, Captain Arnaud. Help me out, if you please."

All turned. It was Kate Hazleton who had fired. Captain Arnaud helped her out, and was assisting Ada, when a new tragedy was enacted. Jim had seized his enemy again, and while they struggled, Bates got the knife into his left hand and stabbed his assailant in the breast. Jim wrested it from his hand, and stabbed him again and again, uttering cries which made the blood of the hearers run cold. When his hold relaxed, a dead man, pierced with many wounds, dropped to the earth. Jim reeled, and would have fallen but Willis caught him and laid him gently down.

"It is done," he said. "Don't think I am crazy any more. I have done my work. He killed my wife; I killed him."

"Poor fellow," said Willis, with glistening eyes. "Come, this need not kill you. Take good care of yourself, and you will recover yet."

"I don't want to," said Jim. "I am ready to die. There is nothing more for me to do. You have always been kind to poor Jim. So have all here. You'll dig me a grave by the lake. I wouldn't ask a better place to lie unless I could find a grave by her side. But that can't be, I'm afraid."

"It *shall* be," said Willis. "I will undertake to see it done. It is only ten miles, and if the major don't give me leave of absence, I'll desert."

"Don't talk in that way, Willis Seaton. You know I'll let you go."

"Thank you. I have been crazy, I guess. I didn't know she was dead. I was a hunter, and lived happily. I wronged no one, and I loved *her*. What I have done in my madness is not sin. I feel a peace in my breast. I know I am going to her. Good-by, old friends. May we meet in a better land than this, where there are no wars nor murders. Lay me down. Your hand, Willis. God bless you, and make you as happy as I was before she died. I could not wish you any happier fate than that. Ah!"

A gasp, a stretching of the athletic limbs, and Wild Jim was at rest.

Willis Seaton kept his word. They carried the body to that ruined cabin in the woods, and dug another grave by the side of the woman who had fallen so early in life. Few go to their rest more pure.

When the wars were over, there were two weddings at Fort Edward, and Captain Willis Seaton had a wife in Ada, whom he had loved so long. His lieutenant, Charley Brady, was married at the same time, and considered his wife the superior of Ada, in spirit at least. And many thought he was right.

Captain Perrie Arnaud, at the battle of Quebec, when Wolfe and Montcalm fell, was the first to lift the fallen marquis. It was of him that the marquis asked the questions preceding his death. Arnaud was wounded, but recovered. He returned to France, and kept up a correspondence with the Bradys and Seatons for many years.

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 493—The Peon Prince. By A. J. H. Duganne. Ready June 21st.
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